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August 21st, 2025 (3:00 PM) – Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Members: Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Anna McKenna, Drew Biemer, Jessica Eskeland, Councilor Nathan Fennessy, Kate Lipman, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Lisa Brown

Staff: Fire Chief John Chisholm, Deputy Fire Chief Hebert, Acting Deputy Fire Chief Costello, Deputy Police Chief Casey, Deputy Police Chief Smagula, Deputy Police Chief Moulton, CPD Social Worker Nicole Petrin, CPD Social Worker Michelle McGonagle

Guests: Theresa Gladstone, Mayor Byron Champlin

Minute Taker: Serina Chase

Welcome from the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm by Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton.

Approval of the April 24th, 2025 meeting minutes

Motion made by Councilor Kretovic to approve the April 24th, 2025 meeting minutes. Jessica Eskeland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Theresa Gladstone presentation (A Place for Everyone)

Theresa Gladstone presented an overview of *A Place for Everyone*, a proposed transitional housing initiative aimed at addressing the needs of Concord's growing chronically homeless population. After retiring, Ms. Gladstone began conducting a feasibility study and forming partnerships with local public safety and social service organizations.

- **Key highlights of her presentation:**
 - The project envisions a 30-unit transitional housing community (starting with 15 units if needed) consisting of tiny homes, ideally on permanent foundations per city requirements.



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- Supportive services would be offered on-site, including case management, mental health and substance use services, financial counseling, and vocational training.
- The community would include communal gardens, a greenway, and shared facilities for laundry and office space for visiting service providers.
- The target population includes unhoused individuals in Concord and surrounding Merrimack County communities, with the aim of housing residents for approximately one year as they transition to permanent housing.
- Collaboration has already taken place with the Concord Police Department, Concord Fire Department, and the City's Community Development Department. Ms. Gladstone noted interest from Merrimack County's diversion program to provide support for property maintenance and workforce engagement.
- The model is inspired by successful programs in other cities (e.g., Austin and Columbus), adapted to local needs and regulatory conditions.
- Land is being scouted; one preferred parcel is not yet for sale but is under informal discussion.
- Safety, zoning, and fire code considerations are being addressed with help from local professionals, including a volunteer engineer.
- Ms. Gladstone was advised to pursue 501(c)(3) status during the feasibility study phase.
- Ms. Gladstone emphasized the importance of providing a stepping stone for individuals not yet ready for traditional housing, and the need for a range of solutions to support the city's most vulnerable residents.

Nicole Petrin Update on CPD Social Work Unit

Nicole Petrin, Concord Police Department's Social Worker, provided an update on the CPD Social Work Unit. The unit is housed within the Community Services Division and has been active for a year and a half, with its inception in February 2024. Concord is the second police department in the state to establish a social work program and notably the first to fund positions outside of grant funding.

- **Program Highlights:**

- **Structure:**

The unit consists of civilian staff who operate city vehicles, use dispatch radios for safety, and follow a "follow-up model" rather than co-response, engaging with



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individuals after police involvement rather than on-scene.

- **Growth:**

Since June 2024, the unit has expanded:

- Hosted its first intern (9 months, 20 hours/week).
- Hired a second full-time social worker (Michelle) in December.
- Is onboarding a third full-time social worker (Sarah, former intern) in September.

- **A.C.E.R.T. Team (Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team):**

The ACERT program, now fully in-house under Michelle's management after previously being contracted through Merrimack County, has improved response times and support for families after traumatic events. The team has also launched quarterly collaboration meetings with about 20 partner agencies, including Waypoint and Riverbend, to strengthen referral coordination and service delivery.

- **Training & Outreach:**

New officers now receive training from the Social Work Unit, which includes presentations and visits to key community service providers. The unit also engages in regular outreach through informational handouts and participation in events like National Night Out. Additionally, weekly "Power Hour" meetings with local service providers help coordinate care and ensure consistent messaging for the top five individuals facing homelessness-related crises each week.

- **Data & Referrals:**

Between January 1 and August 1, 2025, the Social Work Unit managed 101 cases, primarily involving aging/elderly concerns, domestic violence, mental health, substance use, death, and housing issues—including hoarding or unsafe conditions. Most referrals originate from officers and detectives, with additional cases coming through self-referrals, lobby walk-ins, and proactive review of daily police call logs. The team is also experiencing a rise in walk-in requests, which they are working to balance while maintaining service capacity.



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- **Case Trends:**

Caseloads have continued to rise steadily since 2024. While tracking for 2025 ACERT cases is ongoing, current data is delayed due to the recent retirement of a statewide reporting system, which has complicated the process of accessing and compiling accurate figures.

CPD and CFD Updates

Concord Police Department

- **Staffing Progress:**

CPD began the year 14 officers short but has since hired six new officers: one lateral transfer and five new recruits. The lateral officer will enter the field training program after completing orientation. The five recruits will attend the 16-week Police Academy, followed by 16 weeks of field training, with anticipated solo patrol readiness by April 2026. Two recent resignations were due to personal reasons—family relocation and a federal career pursuit—rather than internal department issues.

- **Recruitment Outlook:**

The department is seeing stronger applicants and positive momentum, likely driven by a new police contract, progress on facility upgrades, and increased public visibility of Concord's complex policing needs.

- **Police K9 Program Relaunch:**

After a 20-year hiatus, CPD is reinstating its Police Canine Unit through grant funding. A new Belgian Malinois has been selected, with the handler beginning 14 weeks of training next month. The K9 is expected to be in service by the end of the year, enhancing response capabilities for building searches and mutual aid calls.

- **Liberty (Comfort Dog) Update:**

Liberty, CPD's comfort dog, is turning 8. The department is planning for succession to ensure continued success of the program.



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Concord Fire Department

- **Current Vacancies:**

CFD currently has seven floor vacancies, with one conditional offer extended.

- **Firefighter Contract:**

The recently approved firefighter contract is still pending final signatures. Once finalized, a targeted hiring campaign will be launched, with optimism that recruitment will significantly improve.

- **Paramedic Shortage:**

Paramedic roles remain the hardest to fill. Internal employees have been supported to attend paramedic school. One has completed final exams and is preparing for national certification. A second is close behind. A third candidate is expected to start training soon, in an estimated 18-month program. There is strong internal interest and good progress in growing paramedic capacity from within.

- **Morale & Workforce Culture**

Staffing shortages have affected morale over the past few years. CFD leadership recently met with labor unions to begin working collaboratively in order to improve organizational culture and moral.

- **New Fire Prevention Role**

A third position in the Fire Prevention Division has been authorized, with a planned start in January 2026. This will enhance inspection efficiency, plan reviews, and community outreach.

- **Tower Truck:**

Final inspection of the new tower truck is underway, with delivery expected within the next month. A tanker truck is also due soon, while two ambulances have been delayed again and are now expected in early 2026.

- **PFAS-Free Gear:**

The department is awaiting PFAS-free turnout gear. While some departments received early versions, CFD's manufacturer held back distribution due to failed durability tests. A



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new vapor barrier is currently under evaluation, and CFD is first in line to receive gear once it receives final approval, which may already have occurred.

- **Main Street Traffic Barriers**

The Main Street traffic barrier project is still moving forward. It required an RFP (Request for Proposal) process. Bids are due soon and will be evaluated by a city-appointed team. The process was carefully designed to protect the city's financial interests in case grant funding falls through.

Agenda setting

- Councilor Jim Schlosser – Progress report on draft cold weather emergency plan created by Concord Coalition to End Homelessness and the Friendly Kitchen
- Healy Park update
- Councilor Jim Schlosser – Review of latest Homelessness Data Report for Merrimack County from the NH Bureau of Homelessness Services

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Schlosser. Drew Biemer seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:11pm.