



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

DRAFT

October 16, 2025 (3:00 PM) – Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Members: Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton, Councilor Nathan Fennessy, Natch Greyes, Steve Edwards, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Councilor Jeff Foote, Ana McKenna, Kate Lipman

Staff: Fire Chief Chisholm, Acting Deputy Fire Chief Costello, Deputy Fire Chief Hebert, Deputy Police Chief Casey, Deputy Police Chief Smagula, Deputy Police Chief Barrett

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 October 16th, 2025 meeting minutes

Motion made by Councilor Fennessy to approve the October 16th, 2025 meeting minutes. Natch Greyes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Kate Lipman – Harm reduction writeup overview

- **Background & Information Provided**
 - A memo and CDC pamphlet were shared to explain syringe service programs (SSPs).
 - In NH, SSPs must be certified by DHHS. Two organizations operate in Concord—the (1) Community Action Program of Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. Housing Stabilization & Homeless Outreach and the (2) Concord Exchange (run by the NH Harm Reduction coalition).
 - Data shows:
 - Concord Exchange gave out ~100,000 syringes in a year.
 - General return rate is about 80% or more compared to what is distributed, depending on the organization.



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- **Community Concerns Raised**

- Perception that SSPs attract more homeless people to Concord.
- Visible needles remain a problem, especially near encampments, bridges, and public spaces (e.g., I-393 area).
- Questions about whether programs actually reduce discarded needles, disease transmission, or homelessness rates.

- **Data & Evidence**

- National and state studies (CDC, VA) generally show SSPs:
 - Reduce spread of HIV and other diseases.
 - Increase access to education, testing, and referrals.
 - Do not appear to increase crime or unsafe disposal.
- Overdose “declines” may reflect more widespread Narcan use, not less drug use.
- Local data on Concord-specific outcomes is limited.

- **Funding**

- Programs are funded through a mix of private donations, state grants, and opioid settlement funds.
- Recent federal guidance restricts use of federal dollars for syringes and harm reduction kits, raising questions about sustainability.

- **Law Enforcement & Public Safety Perspectives**

- Police and fire personnel encounter needles frequently, especially at encampments, but also in homes and parks.
- Exposure risks for first responders are a concern.
- Optics of syringe distribution are challenging, with some residents and homeless individuals opposed.

- **Policy & Next Steps**



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- Suggestions included:
 - Invite SSP representatives or DHHS staff to present data and answer questions.
 - Explore whether policies could increase collection rates (while avoiding strict “one-for-one” requirements that discourage returns).
 - Use the presentation to build a clearer understanding of Concord’s programs, so that more informed recommendations can be developed for City Council consideration.
- Agreement that a structured conversation with program leaders, plus clearer data on local impact, would help guide decisions.

Councilor Kretovic - Follow-up on neighborhood speeding concerns in Wards 1–3 (Sewell Falls, Manor Rd, Abbott Rd, Fisherville Rd), including patrol data review, school zone impacts, and broader citywide speeding patterns

- Councilor Kretovic was not available to give presentation

Agenda Setting

- **Police Station Presentation & Safety Concerns**
 - Proposal to invite Beth and the Police Department to present at the next meeting on the new police station. This would be to ensure members are informed and able to understand safety concerns faced by officers and staff, and how the new facility design addresses them.
 - Noted that existing station conditions allow unsafe overlap between civilians, detainees, and staff, which experts have flagged as a major concern.
 - Discussion that City Council may benefit from both a public presentation and a non-public session to review safety issues in more detail.
 - Suggestion that a tour of the current facility would help Council and others grasp the poor conditions and design flaws firsthand.
 - **Presentation slated for November.**
- **Pedestrian Safety Concerns**



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- Police Department tracks monthly pedestrian and bicycle accident data; incidents are spread citywide with no single high-risk intersection, though some roads show higher volume.
- Discussion on a future presentation of this topic and data to be given by Deputy Police Chief Casey and Karen Hills, from the Traffic Ops Committee
- **Presentation slated for December.**
- **Fire Stations Presentation & Safety Concerns**
 - Proposal for Fire Chief Chisholm to provide a presentation on safety concerns and the overall condition of Concord's fire stations.
 - **Presentation date unspecified**
- **Mutual Aid & Non-Resident Services**
 - Concern that Concord may be covering calls for neighboring towns and large facilities without reimbursement, creating a burden on city taxpayers.
 - Mutual aid provides training value but increases costs.
 - In the current system, no contracts exist with facilities like nursing homes or state institutions.
 - Agreed to review data on mutual aid responses and explore options for reimbursement or cost-sharing with municipalities and state facilities so that more informed recommendations can be developed for City Council consideration.
 - **Presentation tentatively slated for January**

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Fennessy. Natch Greyes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.