

COVID-19 Protocol for Concord Annual Town Meeting 2021

Note: Subject to Amendment; Check for updates at www.concordma.gov

Revised: May 21, 2021

Although a significant portion of Concord's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and public health restrictions are being lifted by Governor Baker and Concord's Board of Health as of May 29th, Concord Annual Town Meeting will maintain many of the special protocols adopted last year out of respect for those who remain vulnerable and those who remain anxious. We want every Concord voter who wishes to participate in Town Meeting to feel comfortable enough to do so. Town Meeting will take place outdoors, on the Doug White Field at Concord Carlisle Regional High School, on Sunday, June 13, 2021, at 1:00 pm (rain date: Monday, June 14, 2021 at 5:00 pm). 2021 Town Meeting Protocol is intended to provide as nearly as possible the participatory experience to which Concord voters are accustomed, while protecting public health. Please check the town website www.concordma.gov regularly for addenda to the Protocol and other information on 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

MEETING LOGISTICS

- 1. Venue.** Annual Town Meeting will be outdoors, where the risk of virus transmission is at its lowest, on the Doug White Fields located at the Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. The artificial turf surface of the Doug White Fields precludes tents secured by poles and stakes; seating will therefore be uncovered. There will be a small "pop-up" tented area(s) for respite from heat and medical emergencies. **NOTE THAT ONLY UNADULTERATED WATER IS PERMITTED TO BE CONSUMED ON THE DOUG WHITE FIELDS ARTIFICIAL TURF** – no flavored or colored drinks and no food of any kind.
- 2. Seating Arrangements.** Pairs of folding chairs will be pre-positioned on the field at a minimum of 6' apart; members of the same household and fully vaccinated persons may sit together. Aisles will be wide to allow a comfortable distance from others while moving about the field.
- 3. Requirements of Voters.** Voters are asked **not to attend** if they have a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, or have had a known exposure within the preceding two weeks to a person infected with COVID-19. Attendees will be required to wear facial coverings and to observe a reasonable physical distance from others when queuing and moving about the venue. Removal of facial coverings is permitted while seated and when speaking at a microphone. Voters should bring sunscreen, hats, umbrellas, sunglasses, insect repellent, and water. A limited quantity of these items will be available for those who have neglected to bring their own. **Voters should plan to arrive early this year as walking distances will be longer.**
- 4. Accessibility Accommodations.** Accessible parking will be available immediately adjacent to the Doug White Fields, in the uppermost parking lot. Accessible seating will be reserved in the section of the field closest to the accessible parking. The parking lot, paths, and field are accessible surfaces. Hearing assistance devices will be available. Due to the daylight

venue and large seating distances, closed captioning will not be possible at 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

5. **Check-in Procedure.** Voter check-in will be located in the lobby on the front (upper) side of the high school facing the Doug White Field. Voters should enter the high school through the entrance near the cafeteria-side parking lot and go to the upper lobby for voter check-in. The location and appropriate physical distance markers while queueing will be identifiable by clear signage, and staff will be available to guide voters. To improve check-in flow, checkers will be using an iPad system which will not require voters to organize themselves alphabetically by name or street address. Staff will provide voters with a voting slip at check-in. Meeting Materials will be available on tables on location.
6. **Organization of Boards and Committees.** The Select Board and the Finance Committee will be seated together in designated areas, as will the School Committee and Planning Board while their articles are being addressed by the Meeting. The Moderator will make note for voters of the locations of these boards and committees.
7. **Restrooms.** The Doug White Fields are serviced by a public restroom building. Voters will be asked to queue outside the restrooms at an appropriate physical distance and to limit occupancy of the restroom to a posted maximum number of persons. Voters are reminded to wash their hands for at least twenty seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer (both provided). Custodial staff will be on site to attend to the restrooms.
8. **Water.** All voters should bring their own water. Limited quantities of water in individual serving containers will be available. On the advice of the Board of Health, there will be no ability at the Meeting to refill water bottles.
9. **Medical Emergencies.** There will be a tent without sides available for temporary rest and medical emergencies. There will be medical emergency staff on site.
10. **Parking.** In addition to the accessible parking available at the Doug White Field lot, regular parking will be available in the CCHS lots and the Beede Center lot. Overflow parking will be available at the Alcott School parking lot, with (physically/socially distant) shuttle bus transportation to CCHS available.
11. **Childcare.** As at Annual Town Meeting 2020, there will be no childcare provided at Annual Town Meeting this year.
12. **Weather/Public Health or Safety Contingency Plans.** Rain, wind, heat, or a public health or safety threat could require postponement of the Meeting from June 13. The “rain date” for the Meeting is Monday, June 14, at 5:00 pm. The Moderator would make any postponement determination in consultation with the Select Board and town public health and safety officials. Notice of any postponement will be given to voters by posting on the town website, www.concordma.gov, Concord News & Notices announcements to subscribers, automated telephone call to Code Red subscribers, announcements on the town’s Facebook and Twitter, and posting at the Meeting venue.

ADJUSTMENTS TO MEETING PROCEDURE

- 1. Meeting Materials.** Daylight, distance, and WiFi/power logistics will prevent us from having video presentation screens this year. Instead, information on each article to be taken up will be printed in the Meeting Materials distributed to voters at check-in, and voters will be asked to consult their materials. Meeting Materials will be posted on the town website www.concordma.gov in advance of the Meeting. There will be no “handouts” distributed at the Meeting other than the Meeting Materials provided at check-in. Any board/committee, organization or citizen wishing to present a “handout” on an article may make advance request for the Moderator’s approval to incorporate the handout in the Meeting Materials.
- 2. No Presentations on Articles.** **In the interests of shortening the Meeting and reducing the risk to public health, there will be no presentations on articles at this year’s Annual Town Meeting.** As we reach each article, the Moderator will refer voters to the motion under the article and background materials included in the Meeting Materials, and open the floor for questions and comments. A one-page narrative on each article written by its sponsor will be included in the Meeting Materials. **In preparation to attend Annual Town Meeting, voters are urged to watch the recorded public hearings on the articles which are available on the town website, www.concordma.gov, under the Town Meeting tab.**
- 3. Consent Calendar.** As is customary in Concord, there will be a Consent Calendar consisting of articles to be taken up as a group and voted upon by the Meeting without deliberation. The Consent Calendar is published in the FinCom Report and posted on the town’s website. The modifications to the usual practice with respect to the Consent Calendar adopted last year will again be adopted this year. First, the Consent Calendar will be more broadly inclusive than usual, incorporating not only “routine and non-controversial articles,” but also non-routine articles on which both the Select Board and the Finance Committee (if it is making a recommendation) recommend affirmative action and strong community support is expected. Second, any **ten** voters will be able to remove an article from the Consent Calendar for full debate, prior to the Meeting voting on the Consent Calendar. This temporary increase from the usual five-voter requirement is made to solicit a slightly stronger sentiment from the Meeting that the public interest in fully debating an article outweighs the public interest in keeping the Meeting shorter, and virus transmission risk lower, by voting on the article without full deliberation.
- 4. Motions to Amend.** Any motions to amend will be required to be presented to the Moderator in writing in advance of being made. There will be further direction at the Meeting on how to present a motion to amend to the Moderator. The mover of an amendment will be allowed two minutes to speak to the amendment. Those considering a motion to amend an article are strongly urged to email the Moderator in advance of the Meeting at moderator@concordma.gov. If received in time by the printing deadline,

motions to amend will be included in the Meeting Materials distributed at Town Meeting; if not, they will be read to the Meeting when made.

5. **Speaking from the Floor.** Microphones will be available for voters to speak from the floor. In light of the public health threat posed by the pandemic and the accordant advisability of limiting the length of the Meeting, speaking time from the floor will be limited to one minute per person and strictly enforced. We will return to our customary two-minute time limit when the pandemic has been resolved. Speakers will be asked to wear masks while queuing to speak and returning to their seats, but may remove them while speaking.
6. **Voting.** The Moderator will take votes on the motions by asking voters to raise the color paper voting slip provided at check-in. Tellers will be present to take a standing vote count in the event that the Moderator cannot visually call the vote. In the event that the Meeting votes to take a vote by secret ballot, the procedure for taking the vote will be announced by the Moderator.