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Politics & Government

Concord Mayor: 'We Need To Be Aware Of The Impact Of Our Actions'; Next 2 Budgets 'Will Be Challenging'

Mayor Byron Champlin, 11 incumbents, 2 new councilors sworn in to new terms; mayor says "social media amplifies voices of the disaffected."



Tony Schinella, Patch Staff

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New and incumbent city councilors were sworn in on Jan. 5. (Tony Schinella/Patch)



CONCORD, NH — The mayor, 11 incumbents, and 2 new councilors were sworn into office on Monday night.

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Byron Champlin is now serving his second term. He thanked his family and friends who “sustain me with their energy, encouragement, and belief in what Concord is and what it can be.” But Champlin also struck a dark chord in his remarks, warning fellow councilors that while Concord was a great place to live, with many positive aspects, the next two years would be financially challenging. For every discussion with people in the community, including walking Midnight Merriment last month, and listening to residents stopping him and saying how much they loved living in the city, “we live in a time of uncertainty,” Champlin said.

“It sometimes feels as if the ground is shifting beneath our feet,” he said. “Long-established norms no longer seem to apply. Social media amplifies the voices of the disaffected.”

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While Concord was “a wonderful city” and “has a good thing going,” its success was “neither accidental nor free,” Champlin said. The work of past councils had brought the city to this point — often against strong headwinds, he said. At the same time, councilors needed to keep this in mind as they weigh projects and expenses during the next term, he said.

“That’s not to say that the voices of those who feel the pressure of rising property taxes should be ignored,” Champlin added. “On the contrary, we need to be aware of the impact of our actions, particularly on those with limited or fixed incomes.”

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Champlin added, “Everyone around the world has to make tough choices — just like the tough choices C

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health insurance costs would increase, along with the cost of goods and services. Still, he also hoped the state would not shirk its responsibilities to the community. Champlin also called for more economic development and pointed to successes like Merchant’s Way at Exit 17 and Penacook Village. He said, when the legislative parking garage is dismantled, the area “will be ripe for redevelopment and tax base expansion.” The mayor said he was also hopeful for “enormous potential” at the former Steeplegate Mall site and commended the young entrepreneurs who have stepped forward to make their mark on the community.

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“Concord sits at a crossroads,” he said. “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 ... I believe that this council is up to the task.”

Sekou Reelected Mayor Pro Tem

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Ward 8 Concord City Councilor Ali Sekou
mayor pro tem.

Ward 1 Councilor Brent Todd nominate

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Ward 5 Councilor Stacey Brown nominated Michele Horne, of Ward 2, but the nomination did not receive a second. Sekou was then unanimously approved.

Sekou said he was “deeply honored” to be reelected again for a second term and thanked his wife, too, for raising their children in Concord as well as the voters from Ward 8 for re-electing him to a second term.

“I do not take this responsibility lightly,” he said. “And I will continue to serve as I have since I first arrived here.”

Sekou also thanked Imam Gabir Ahmed of the Islamic Society of Greater Concord and Tom Raffio, the president and CEO of Northeast Delta Dental, for supporting him and pushing him to complete higher education. He also thanked everyone who helped him with his reelection campaign.

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“As Mayor pro temp,” he said, “I commit to lead with transparency and to listen with intention. I believe effective and ethical governance is grounded in trust. Trust between the resident and the local government.”

Councilor Remarks

Todd thanked the voters and his family for their support, saying there had been many long meetings and that he had been flexible to serve.

“It is very difficult to do this job alone,” he said while thanking his wife Althea. “You can’t do it alone. She is al
couldn’t do this really without her sup

Todd said he was looking forward to fa
said members were well-suited to tack

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Horne also thanked voters and her family — noting her daughters seem to enjoy their one-hour dinners downtown between work and meetings. She also thanked supporters and community members who agreed with her, as well as those who challenged her.

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“Your voices matter,” she said. “I remain committed to listening, to being communicative, to showing up, and keeping my promise of being a voice for the working class.”

Horne thanked Todd for their work together since their wards cover Penacook. She also thanked City Clerk Janice Bonenfant for all her department’s work helping councilors.

Ward 3 Councilor Jennifer Kretovic opened her remarks by honoring the late Jim Howard, who was the city’s finance director for more than three decades. He passed away in late November 2025 at the age of 77. Kretovic called him funny and said he was responsible for moves which brought the city to digitize records and documents, as well as getting councilors iPads.

Kretovic also welcomed the two new councilors and commended them for running.

“At our best,” she said of the council, “this body is guided by thoughtful dialogue and mutual respect. We welcome rigorous discussion. We ask difficult questions, and we engage one personalizing disagreements.”



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Kretovic also thanked her family, inclu

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from Maryland for the swearing-in. He thanked them for being there, as well as the voters. He admitted filing at the last minute at the urging of friends, including at-large City Councilor Judith Kurtz and others.

Davie said he had “massive shoes to fill” after outgoing Councilor Karen McNamara and Champlin, and also thanked city staff for helping him adapt to the new role.

Ward 5 Councilor Stacey Brown said she was “thrilled to be here for a third term,” calling it a fantastic opportunity to be at the council table. She also thanked her family.

Brown also clarified that her nomination of Horne for mayor pro tem was not a challenge to Sekou. She expected her to decline the position because she always puts service above personal advancement.

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“Yet that humility, rooted in unwavering integrity, is precisely why she deserves this recognition,” Brown said. “Since joining us in Ward 2, Michelle has led with complete independence, no prior allegiances, only a steadfast commitment to what's right for every resident. She questions spending thoughtfully, champions transparent processes, and advocates fairly for affordable housing, working families, and inclusive voices from every corner of our city.”



Horne, she said, had incredible social r informed, adding, “I can't keep up.” B called Horne an inspiration.

“I’m looking forward to working with

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both the incumbents and new members.

Amanda Grady Sexton, the second-longest serving city councilor, congratulated everyone and said she was grateful to have been reelected.

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“It is a real honor to serve, and I am incredibly grateful to all of the residents of Concord for sending me back here for another four years,” she said.

“Concord is the greatest city in the greatest state in the nation.”

She thanked “the incredibly hardworking and dedicated staff, here in the city,” and also her family.

Fred Keach, the longest-serving city councilor, who was also re-elected to another four-year term, thanked voters and his colleagues around the table. He also acknowledged the staff, saying it had to have been a difficult job managing 15 different opinions on the council.

While some meetings were hot in the prior term, Keach struck a conciliatory tone, suggesting he knew they all wanted the best for the city.

“I do want to say that there are times we all disagree around the table,” he said, “but the one thing I do believe in my heart is that we all want the best for Concord. There's disagreement on how to get there, but in the end, I truly believe in everyone's heart.”



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Keach also acknowledged the staff, “but it was a difficult job to answer to 15 different perspectives. And at times, I'm not sure how you manage that.”

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congratulations to everyone.

Ward 6 Councilor Aislinn Kalob said she was grateful to be supported by councilors and staff in the wake of her election. She also thanked many friends and members of the ward who supported her.

“Like many of you,” she said of residents in the ward, “I am a working-class person, and I'm a renter, and I take a lot of pride in where I live. I want us to be able to stay here and to thrive. I showed up to this campaign as my full, authentic self. I used my voice to engage with issues that are important to, evidently, the majority of us in Ward 6; you voted for me because of that. So that is what I will continue to do right now.”

Kalob expected it to be “joyful and meaningful work.”

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Ward 7 Councilor Jim Schlosser, who was elected to a second term, also thanked the voters in his ward, calling it a privilege to serve. He said the two most important issues facing the council were expanding the tax base and expanding housing. Both issues, Schlosser said, were linked. He said all types of housing were needed, “the whole gamut.”

Schlosser said he was looking forward to participating in Community Development Advisory Committee meetings and working on the master plan refresh.



Ward 8 Councilor Kris Schultz said the her husband and just did it. Later, she : other councilors.

Schultz thanked Grady Sexton, calling

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antagonistic campaign.” She also thanked Sekou, too, for helping her campaign.

Schultz said she believed in the notion of loving your neighbor, adding, “Empathy and compassion matter,” especially in today’s climate.

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“Nothing matters more than the loving kindness we have and share with each other, even when it's difficult,” she said.

Schultz said it was nice that more renters were elected to the council because that point of view needed greater representation on the body. She also backed a new master plan and hoped councilors would find “new ways to find those sources that don't always feel represented or don't feel like their voice matters because everyone's voice does matter.”

Sekou added congratulations to the mayor and the new councilors, and thanked Kretovic for mentioning the passing of Howard.

Jeff Foote, the Ward 10 councilor, had to leave early after being sworn in to pick up a family member at Logan Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, who had been attempting to fly home for four days and was now flying back to the United States in a snowstorm.

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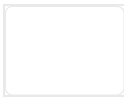
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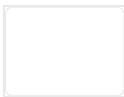
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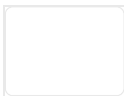
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