

Select Board Meeting
Monday April 25, 2022
6:45 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Niko Papakonstantis, Nancy Belanger, and Town Manager Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:45 PM.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0 and the Board entered non-public session at 6:47 PM.

The Board reconvened at 7 PM.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for a moment of silence to remember former Select Board and BRC member Anne Surman, who passed away last week. Jay Childs, an Exeter resident, spoke about Ms. Surman's life and her service to the town.

2. Public Comment

- a. Dan Kopanski of 5 Holly Court said regarding the proposal to convert three tennis courts into pickleball courts, the demand for tennis courts far exceeds the demand for pickleball, so the courts should stay as-is to serve both tennis and pickleball players.
- b. Kevin Keaveney of 14 Exeter Farms Road also spoke regarding the tennis courts. We shouldn't take away from tennis. This proposal wasn't well publicized; the Rec Department should have a public forum before a decision is made.
- c. Matthew Phillips of 11 Exeter Farms Road said regarding the tennis courts that we must take a measured approach before taking something away that has been working.
- d. Steven Sprinkle said he agreed with the other commenters on the tennis court issue. The dual-use is working and there's no reason to change that.

3. Board Interviews

- a. There were no interviews at this meeting.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

Ms. Gilman read the proclamation of May 1 - 7 as Municipal Clerks Week:
Whereas, the Office of the Municipal Clerk, a time honored and vital part of local government exists throughout the world; and
Whereas, The Office of the Municipal Clerk is the oldest among public servants;
and

Whereas, The Office of the Municipal Clerk provides the professional link between the citizens, the local governing bodies and agencies of government at other levels; and

Whereas, Municipal Clerks have pledged to be ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, rendering equal service to all; and

Whereas, the Municipal Clerk serves as the information center on functions of local government and community: and

Whereas, Municipal Clerks continually strive to improve the administration of the affairs of the Office of the Municipal Clerk through participation in education programs, seminars, workshops and the annual meetings of their state, provincial, county and international professional organizations; and

Whereas, It's most appropriate that we recognize the accomplishments of the Office of the Municipal Clerk; and

Now, Therefore, We the Select Board of Exeter, do recognize the week of May 1 through May 7, 2022 as Municipal Clerks' Week, and further extend appreciation to our Municipal Clerk, Andrea Kohler, and to all Municipal Clerks for the vital services they perform and their exemplary dedication to the communities they represent. Dated the 25th day of April, 2022.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: April 11, 2022

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the public meeting minutes of April 11, 2022 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Appointments

a. Andrew Elliott for the Budget Recommendations Committee

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Andrew Elliott to the Budget Recommendations Committee. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Discussion/Action Items

a. EMS Revolving Fund Request - Air Lifting Bag Replacement

Fire Chief Eric Wilking said the Fire Department is looking to replace their air lifting bag system, which is almost 20 years old. Recently we found a bag that was leaking, and the manufacturer's rep came to inspect the bags and found cracks and dry rot. It's recommended to replace them every 15 years. These allow us to lift heavy objects in the case of accidents. It would be \$19,785 from the Ambulance Revolving Fund. Mr. Dean said this fund has a balance of \$190,000. Chief Wilking mentioned that we've applied for a State Revolving Fund grant that would offer a 10% match for future FD purchases.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to allow the Fire Department to expend \$19,785 from the Ambulance Revolving Fund for the purchase of Air Lifting Bags and controllers used during motor vehicle accidents, building collapses, and special rescue situations. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Board & Committee Appointments

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Langdon Plumer to the Planning Board, term to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Gwen English to the Planning Board, term to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Mike Wissler and Jennifer Harrington to the Rec Advisory Board, terms to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Laura Davies to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, term to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Andrew Koff and Conor Madison to the Conservation Commission, terms to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Bill Campbell to the Heritage Commission, term to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Lindsay Sonnett and Kathy Corson to the Housing Advisory Committee, terms to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Terrie Harman to the River Advisory Committee, term to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Christopher Zigmont and Jackie Ojala to the Sustainability Advisory Committee, terms to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Carl Wikstrom and Mark Fabian to the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee, terms to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Todd Hearon to the Arts & Culture Advisory Commission, term to expire April 30, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Hardship Abatement Policy

Mr. Dean said there's been a water/sewer abatement policy in place, but not a tax abatement policy. This draft policy was modeled on another town's, and includes forms that would be filled out by the applicant for the abatement. The Board will make these abatement decisions. This is a first reading of the policy.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked who will assist applicants with the forms, and Mr. Dean said we planned to link it to the Human Services function of the office. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we need to dig into so much information, such as the asset information of the applicants. Ms. Cowan said she wants this to be more inclusive and offer more help, not allow assets to be a barrier to obtaining the abatement. There may be other assistance that applicants can qualify for as well. Mr. Dean said there is about \$250,000 outstanding in taxes, so we need to move these conversations forward. Assets are part of our existing abatement conversations, such as Elderly Exemptions. Mr. Papakonstantis said if this information is stored electronically, we risk liability if there were a cyber attack or security issue. Mr. Dean said they would likely be stored as paper copies. Mr. Papakonstantis said our goal is to encourage people to come in so we can connect them with further services, not discourage them from applying. Mr. Dean said he will bring the policy back in the future.

d. Legislative Updates

Ms. Gilman gave an update on bills at the State level. The biggest issue was HB1272 in the Senate, which would have changed the authority of the Health Officer to just property concerns. The committee found that the bill wouldn't allow us to react to a crisis and they voted it inexpedient to legislate. It will go to the Senate floor on the 28th but is unlikely to pass. There was a bill proposing that any communications with a town's attorney would be subject to the RSA 91-A Right to Know law, but that was also killed. One bill relative to the disqualification of those on the ballot for performing the duty of an elected official came off the floor as "ought to pass" and will go to the Governor. A bill which would have allowed town clerks to open the outside envelope of an absentee ballot as they come in did not pass, so we cannot pre-process ballots. There's a bill regarding affidavit voting for those who don't present identification, which would set up a separate voting system for them. This is also in front of the Governor. A postpartum health care bill, which extends care for a year under Medicaid, passed. There were several Human Services bills about children in need. A bill to allow a pier at Hampton Beach passed. Some redistricting bills are before the Governor. A bill relative to overriding a tax cap in SB2 towns passed the House and it's before the Senate. The Bridge Aid and Wastewater State Aid Grants have passed. A bill to limit elections of Coop school districts to have each town vote for its own representatives failed in the House, but Rep Abrami introduced it as a non-germane amendment to another bill.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

Mr. Dean presented a list of A9 Charitable exemptions, including PEA, the Hospital, and Riverwoods. Ms. Gilman said she would like to table this matter until the Board can review them further.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Disability Exemption for 95/64/307 in the amount of \$125,000 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Disability Exemption for 95/64/335 in the amount of \$125,000 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 104/79/911 in the amount of \$183,751 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 104/79/225 in the amount of \$152,251 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 95/64/302 in the amount of \$152,251 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit for 65/124/32 in the amount of \$500 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit with Disability Credit for 65/124/32 in the amount of \$2,000 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit for 69/3/406 in the amount of \$500 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit with Disability Credit for 69/3/406 in the amount of \$2,000 for the year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a tax abatement for 104/79/602 in the amounts of \$420.52 for the year 2018; \$595.93 for 2019; \$626.62 for 2020; and \$14.41 for 2021. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a tax abatement for 64/105/42 in the amount of \$388.96 for the year 2021. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

- i. No permits or approvals were considered at this meeting.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. The Facilities Condition Assessment RFP has been sent to vendors.
- ii. The town's audit field work will take place May 23 - 27. Our new Finance Director Mr. Stevens has been diligent in working on this.
- iii. HB398 has been signed by the Governor, and we will see our first payment after July 1, 2022.
- iv. A Public Safety Building public information session will be held on May 4.
- v. A company called Bird Scooter is interested in coming to town. It's a scooter rental service that runs through an app. Nashua already has this service.

- vi. We've finalized our solid waste contract extension with Waste Management, which the Board authorized.
- vii. Mellissa Roy is looking for Federal funding for 10 Hampton Road and Police radios.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports
 - i. Ms. Oliff had no report.
 - ii. Ms. Cowan had a Communications Advisory meeting, where we talked in-depth about the launch of the new website.
 - iii. Ms. Gilman had no report.
 - iv. Ms. Belanger had a Housing Advisory Committee meeting; the May 6 Regional Conversation on Public Housing is now a public forum. The Conservation Commission sent out an RFP for Raynes Farm. The McDonnell Gate is now open off of Linden Street. The gateway deed was signed by the Chair. The Alewife Festival is May 14 with a rain date of May 21. The DPW is looking for support for a culvert that is failing off of Drinkwater Road. We paid \$900 for membership fees to the NH Society of Conservation Commissions. The Planning Board had a site plan review for the Phillips Exeter multifamily project, and went on a sitewalk. She attended a demonstration on April 13 for the possibility of town officials using tablets in functions related to voting.
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Swasey Park Trustees talked about Arbor Day, when five tree cutting firms will volunteer their services. We will get \$19,000-20,000 worth of work for an expense of under \$1,000 for breakfast and lunch for the workers; the food will be from local restaurants. The Parkway will be closed to traffic during the project but pedestrians will be allowed.
- e. Correspondence
 - i. A letter from Attorney Mitchell asking the Board to discourage HB1073.
 - ii. A letter from the Facilities Advisory Committee regarding the Public Safety Garage. Mr. Dean said he thinks this letter was a draft.
 - iii. A notice of a community forum on aging at Exeter Public Library on May 20.
 - iv. Letters from Big Brothers Big Sisters and New Generations thanking the town for their donations.

9. Review Board Calendar

- a. The scheduled meetings are May 9 and May 23, but Ms. Cowan has a conflict with May 23. The Board will revisit the calendar at the May 9 meeting.
- b. Florence Ruffner has invited Board members to march in the Memorial Day Parade.

10. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA91-A:3II(a). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, all were in favor and the motion passed 5-0. The meeting entered non-public at 8:30 PM.

11. Adjournment. Selectomwan Belanger moved to seal the minutes. Selectwoman Gilman seconded. The Board voted unanimously to seal the minutes. Selectwoman Belanger moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectwoman Gilman. The Board stood adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary