

Select Board Meeting
Monday June 13, 2022
6:50 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, Town Manager Russ Dean, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:52 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

3. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Mr. Papakonstantis read the proclamation for Arbor Day:

*Whereas, In 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and
Whereas, this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and
Whereas, Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and
Whereas, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife, and
Whereas, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and
Whereas, trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and
Whereas, trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.
Now, therefore, I, Niko Papakonstantis, Select Board Chair of the Town of Exeter, do hereby proclaim the 21st of June, 2022 as Arbor Day in the Town of Exeter, and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day by supporting efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and
Further, I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.*

- b. Mr. Papakonstantis recognized Assistant Fire Chief Justin Pizon for winning the 2022 Southeast Region Champion for Children award from the NH School Administrators Association for his work with Covid vaccination and safety gear.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: May 31, 2022

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of May 31, 2022 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

5. Appointments and Resignations

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Bob Dudra to the Rec Advisory Board, term to expire April 2024. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Cowan said while she had been absent at the interview, she knows Bob well and is confident in his ability to serve. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the resignation of Bev Tappan from the Sustainability Committee. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Public Hearing: Friends of Coastal Waters School

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to open the public hearing. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Bill Libby, the Board Chair of the Friends of Coastal Waters, was present to discuss the proposal. This is a new Charter School serving grades K-12, with 220 students enrolled. They follow the Waldorf education model, with lots of nature time. The curriculum is aligned with the State standards. School would take place 8:30 AM - 3 PM Monday through Friday. The school is looking at staggering family drop-off in the morning to reduce traffic. There will be no buses, but they're working with DOE to get a van or two. The location is the old Tyco building at 2 Holland Way, which has 14 acres of land with a field and woods. School will be aligning with the Exeter school calendar, and opening August 29. They haven't done any traffic studies, but in talking with Steve Haight of Civil Works, he didn't see the need due to the width of the road and breakdown lane. There would be up to 320 students, 20 for Kindergarten and 25 for each of the rest of the grades. They're working on putting up school zone signs.

Ms. Belanger said one of the pluses is that school starts later than the Middle School, so that traffic will have happened. Mr. Libby said drop offs will be staggered so there would be around 70 cars at a time.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if the DPW has looked into putting a light at the nearby intersection on Hampton Road. Mr. Dean said he didn't think so. Mr. Papakonstantis asked when the traffic study will be done, and Mr. Libby said they're not required to do a traffic study, but will keep an eye on the traffic.

Mr. Papakonstantis opened the hearing to public comment, but there was none.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Dean said the Select Board can offer non-binding comments or echo what the Planning Board said. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Planning Board's recommendations were thorough. The Select Board can work with the school once we see what the traffic is like.

b. Proposed Stoney Brook Development

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board received word that the applicant requested this matter to be tabled.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to table the discussion of the proposed Stoney Brook Development. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Accept Locality Equipment Purchase Grant \$50,000

Assistant Fire Chief Justin Pizon said that in 2006, Stryker, our Ambulance Cot provider, came out with a power cot which assisted with the lifting of up to 800 pounds. In 2007 or 2008, Exeter got its first power cots. In 2016, Stryker came out with a Powerloader system, which can lift cots into an ambulance with the press of a button, but at the time it was too expensive. With GOFFER funds and to some degree ARPA, we have a grant opportunity. This would be \$50,000, with a 10% matching component, or \$5,000, for the town. We were awarded that grant two weeks ago. The total cost for both ambulances with a 4 year warranty would be \$58,078.56. The Select Board should authorize \$8,078.56 out of the EMS revolving fund. There is currently \$170,000 in that account.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to accept the Locality Equipment Purchase Program grant for \$50,000 for the purchase of 2 MTS Power Load systems to be installed in Ambulance 1 and 2. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to expend \$8,078.56 from the EMS Revolving Fund which is the 10% matching obligation for the Locality Equipment Purchase program and the additional funds required to purchase 2 MTS Power Load Systems based on Stryker quote 10146884 dated June 7, 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the Town Manager to sign anything necessary to effectuate the previous two motions. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Primex CAP Agreements 2023 - 2025

Mr. Dean said there are two Primex resolutions, one for Worker's Comp and one for Property and Liability Insurance. The town has participated in the CAP (Contribution Assurance Program) for many years. This sets caps on increases of 6% for Workers Comp and 7% for Property and Liability Insurance.

Mr. Papakonstantis said Primex is the only insurance pool in NH that focuses on municipalities. In addition to their insurance offering, there's a training aspect that they offer.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the resolution for Workers' Compensation:
RESOLVED: To hereby accept the offer of the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange (Primex) to enter into its Workers' Compensation Contribution Assurance Program (CAP) as of the date of the adoption of this resolution, and to be contractually bound to all of the terms and conditions of Primex risk management pool membership during the term of the Workers' Compensation Contribution Assurance Program (CAP). The coverage provided

by Primex in each year of membership shall be as then set forth in the Coverage Documents of Primex. I attest that the foregoing is a true copy of the Resolution of the Governing Board of the Town of Exeter adopted on June 13, 2022.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to authorize Mr. Dean to sign the resolution to enter the Primex Workers Compensation CAP. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the resolution for Property & Liability:

RESOLVED: To hereby accept the offer of the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange (Primex) to enter into its Property & Liability Contribution Assurance Program (CAP) as of the date of the adoption of this resolution, and to be contractually bound to all of the terms and conditions of Primex risk management pool membership during the term of the Property & Liability Contribution Assurance Program (CAP). The coverage provided by Primex in each year of membership shall be as then set forth in the Coverage Documents of Primex. I attest that the foregoing is a true copy of the Resolution of the Governing Board of the Town of Exeter adopted on June 13, 2022.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to authorize Mr. Dean to sign the resolution to enter Primex Property and Liability CAP. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

e. Pickleball/Tennis

Mr. Papakonstantis said we've heard from both sides of the issue at a previous meeting, and he had asked Parks and Rec Director Greg Bisson to put forward more information and a recommendation.

Mr. Bisson discussed the tennis/pickleball courts. It requires half an acre for a court, but parking will be an issue. Parks and Rec put out a community survey that had 374 respondents, and 63% of those were Exeter residents. Mornings from 7-10 AM were the most popular time for both sports, then weekday evenings. 36% of respondents were tennis players, 20% were pickleball players, 14% were interested in playing both sports, 12% were interested in learning to play pickleball only, 3% were interested in learning to play tennis only, and 3% had no interest in either. When asked if we should keep the stand-alone tennis courts at the Rec Park, 74.19% said yes. 47.6% said we should separate pickleball from the tennis courts, but it would cost \$300,000 - \$500,000 for six pickleball courts, and that's in ideal construction conditions. He reviewed all town parks, and many have limitations that wouldn't allow pickleball courts to be built. Putting them at 10 Hampton Road would reduce the potential parking, prohibiting using it as a community center. At the Rec Park, there's green space, but this would need substantial engineering because it's a drainage area. In the wooded area behind the lower tennis courts, the topography is too difficult. Close to the pool, it could be too close to abutters and create noise. If we were to purchase property, it must be 1+ acres, and we run into residential issues.

He discussed some questions that the Select Board had asked him to address. Can pickleball and tennis function together? Yes. Can park staff set up

nets? Yes. We set up one net with success, but there is a need for more. Some ADA players wanted to use the net, but it was already in use. Can the lower courts be used for the pickleball program instead of the upper courts? Yes, there will be an ADA accessible ramp on order and we are widening the gate, so the lower courts will be ADA compliant. We're trying to get a tree company for quotes on addressing the hickory tree that overhangs the courts. The Tree Committee is in favor of addressing a hazardous tree. We can't reduce the noise coming from 101 without a serious investment in a sound barrier wall. Parks and Rec suggests purchasing 6 temporary pickleball nets to remain in place for the rest of the season in lower courts. There would be a 10 week lag time after we order them. We will move benches and bleachers, and install windscreens. We want to give a way for both pickleballers and tennis to give feedback, such as posting QR codes on site that link to a feedback form. This summer, people will be able to rent pickleball balls and paddles, as well as tennis balls and rackets. We will purchase a push broom and squeegee to clear off court debris. The nets would be \$13,794; this is the same cost from every vendor. Temporary fencing would be \$2,224.61. It would be \$750 for windscreens for the back courts. The total is \$16,768.61. We would take the remainder of the 2022 season to evaluate the programming and gather data for a better recommendation.

Ms. Oliff said if we converted the courts, would the nets we're buying be the permanent ones? Mr. Bisson said yes, you can bolt them down.

Ms. Cowan said this is a smart compromise.

Ms. Gilman said she's encouraged by the number of responses to the survey. If we set up these pickleball courts, are they semi-permanent? Mr. Bisson said there would be a trial period. The majority of people would rather play on the upper courts, so if we move pickleball to the lower courts that will give us an opportunity to assess it.

Ms. Oliff asked how long it takes to switch the courts from pickleball to tennis. Mr. Bisson said it's quick and takes one person. The net would be pushed parallel to the fence when not being used for pickleball.

Ms. Belanger said this leaves around \$10,000 in the Rec Revolving fund, is it typical to go so low? Mr. Bisson said yes, a few months ago it was down to \$500. We spend it down in upgrading the parks.

Mr. Papakonstantis said Mr. Bisson's report thoroughly explores all areas owned by the town for this proposal. Has Mr. Bisson reached out to the school or YMCA? Mr. Bisson said he talked to the SAU, but all of their property is valuable currently. The YMCA is interested in talking about a public-private partnership with the town, and he will be speaking with Kim Meyer of the YMCA this week.

Nancy Riccio of 25 Little Pine Lane said we've been coexisting for years. Pickleball players have said it's hard to set up the nets, but she's seen them do it in under two minutes. Rec staff can help with set up and takedown. They could have a sign that said if you need help, call this number. Don't spend \$16,000 for a study for 10 weeks and then decide not to do it. The survey was flawed because it was open to non-residents and there was no way to ensure the same

respondents didn't respond several times. 370 respondents is also a very small percentage of taxpayers. Other towns sell out all of their tennis lessons, so maybe the effort hasn't been put in in Exeter. The right thing to do is move forward with a warrant article in the next election to build stand-alone pickleball courts.

Pavel Pazourek of 5 Brookside Drive said he is a certified tennis teacher, and he reached out to the town but they weren't interested. He would like to coach. He's worked with ADA players. He would like to continue what Kyle Littlefield was doing. Tennis has been around for a long time and we should encourage it.

Deb Zollner of 48 Hampton Road said there are 3 courts above and 5 courts below. Since Pickleball is asking for 3 courts, why are they splitting it up this way?

Dan Kopanski of 5 Holly Court Exeter said he plays both and it takes him about 4 minutes to set up the pickleball net by himself, or 2 minutes with someone else. Regarding the parking issue, he counted 100 spaces at the Rec Park and he heard that they will keep 60 spaces reserved for pool and camp use and that pickleball has 45 people. Where will they park for the playground, tennis, and other sports? He's confused about the semi-permanent proposal, the nets are 230 pounds, so how can you move them? Right now, you can play pickleball or tennis at any court. If the proposal goes through, there will only be 5 courts to play tennis but you could play pickleball at any court. We should keep it the way it is. Mr. Bisson said pickleball is done by 10 AM, so the parking lot clears out. There are 109 spots. They are 230 pound nets, they are movable if we need to but we will be trialing not moving them.

Michelle Clock of 68 Park Street Unit 1, who was present remotely via Zoom, said she can't set up a net because she has a disability, although people have offered to help her. Regarding the visibility of the lines, she can't see them so wouldn't be able to play independently.

Don Cloutier of Prentiss Way said pickleball has become popular. He tried to bring before the Board an opportunity to change the courts to be permanent. He appreciates that they're trying to find an alternative, but he's not in favor of spending that much money. It clutters the courts up for the tennis players. Maybe we need just one or two semi-permanent pickleball courts. He can set up 16 nets in 30 minutes, but he doesn't want to do that.

Jay Childs of 7 Hunter Place said the survey reveals there's both an active pickleball and tennis community. We should work together to find a solution. This is about having tournaments, and we would need 12 courts to have maximum tournaments. This will take away tennis capacity and won't add pickleball capacity, it will just make the courts exclusive for their use. 2 seems more reasonable than 3.

Kevin Keaveney of 14 Exeter Farms Road said he's seen several times where all 8 courts are being used. With this arrangement, pickleball gets good

hours and good courts. To move down to the bottom would not be ideal for anyone. He wouldn't want to see 3 courts being pulled away from tennis.

Arlene Childs of 7 Hunter Place said we like to play tennis on the upper courts. The lower courts get more debris and light changes.

Don Cloutier of Prentiss Way said we [pickleball players] will take the bottom courts. We have been taking an additional 2 -4 courts on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. If people go on off-times, he can tell them to use the bottom courts. The fundraisers did what they were led to believe was the correct way to do it. He wasn't trying to hide anything, and resents the implication that they were doing something sneaky.

Greg Bisson said the Select Board could modify the proposal to 2 courts. We could still provide windscreens and separation barriers.

Michelle Clock (via Zoom) said she wouldn't mind using the lower courts and would prefer to be in the shade when it's accessible. Right now it's only the upper courts that are accessible.

Jay Childs of 7 Hunter Place said he understands that the process the fundraisers were following was the way they thought they needed to go, so the issue is with Parks and Rec. The pickleball players need to accept there is a vibrant tennis community, and not "very few people" playing tennis.

Ann Cloutier said she's been involved with adaptive pickleball through the Y. We have many requests from organizations to come and play with us. We were thinking that on Wednesday nights from 6 - 8 we would like to play with these people.

Mr. Papakonstantis closed public comment. He said that at the Select Board meeting in March, Mr. Bisson came forward with a proposal to consider, in this case, accepting a donation. At the time, we talked about how generous a donation it was, but it was the first time the Select Board was hearing about a complete makeover of some of the tennis courts. Previous Boards have accepted donations from soccer and softball leagues to improve existing fields for existing play, but we paused because this would make over the tennis courts into something else. He has been walking down to the Rec Courts, and people are playing tennis and pickleball. The Board wanted to look at alternatives before doing something permanent. Mr. Bisson did his homework and eliminated places in town we can't put in courts. He came up with costs, and recommended a solution to expand our offering. Pickleball would now have an exclusive use of 3 courts. Or, we could keep things the way they are, and look at further sites to build permanent pickleball courts. We also should assess the breakdown in process internally.

Ms. Cowan said we're not the only community struggling with this. This compromise doesn't seem to make anyone happy, which might mean this is the right thing to do. This gives a dedicated space, which is what the pickleball players wanted. We can't just take something away permanently that's always been there. There are good courts and bad courts, so she's not in favor of changing something that's not the preferred thing, but we need to make some

changes to improve the lower courts either way. She's fine with purchasing these semi-permanent pieces of equipment, because it sounds like pickleball is growing and eventually we'll need a more permanent solution. We have tennis talent that we need to work and invest in. This season, we should invest the money in equipment we'll continue to use either in permanent pickleball courts or via this solution. Not everyone can set up pickleball nets in minutes, so she's in support of a solution that allows people to play in the manner that's best for them. She thinks the Board has learned a lot and she doesn't think this mistake will happen again.

Ms. Oliff said she's impressed with this proposal. She likes the idea of having two courts, which solves the issue of putting nets up quickly. She thinks we should also have two nets at the upper courts for ADA issues, maybe for just this summer. We should look further at other places for pickleball, such as the YMCA.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board already approved things to make the lower courts accessible. Mr. Bisson said the ramps have been ordered and the deposit has been mailed. The fence company is ready to go. The lower courts will be ADA accessible by the end of July. The path is 54" wide and meets ADA, and the slope to run meets code. It looks steep but is ADA Compliant.

Ms. Gilman said she agrees with Ms. Cowan that if no one's completely happy that's the solution. The equipment we'd be ordering will not be unused no matter what the solution.

Ms. Oliff said her proposal is that the first court from the playground would be two pickleball courts.

Ms. Belanger said she prefers the two for this summer and see how it turns out. She wants to see how a public/private partnership works out.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved that the town temporarily convert the first tennis court next to the parking lot at the Rec Park, or "Court 1," by placing two semi-permanent pickleball nets that will be used full time for pickleball, and to expend \$5,348 to purchase the two pickleball nets and windscreens of 180 square feet for the lower courts. Ms. Cowan seconded. Mr. Papakonstantis said he will vote nay because he thinks the bottom courts are the right place to start with dedicated pickleball courts, but the motion on the table is inclusive and a good compromise. The motion passed 4-1.

7. Regular Business

- a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions
 - i. There were no abatements considered at this meeting.
- b. Permits & Approvals
 - i. There were no permits or approvals considered at this meeting.
- c. Town Manager's Report
 - i. We had a successful bond issue. We went to market for 10 Hampton Road and Groundwater, and got an interest rate of 2.63%, which is a little higher than recent years.
 - ii. Town offices will be closed June 20 for Juneteenth.

- iii. He and Pam met with Seacoast Family promise and had a tour. They're looking to do more expansive housing.
 - iv. Mr. Papakonstantis asked for an update on Congressional Spending. Mr. Dean said he doesn't have an update but will get one. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if our DPW openings have been filled. Mr. Dean said no, we still have openings. Mr. Papakonstantis asked that parking and the ADA report be put on the next Select Board agenda.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports
- i. Ms. Belanger said the Housing Advisory Committee met June 10. Mark Connors, the Town Planner from Stratham, spoke. Mr. Sharples met with Horsley Whitten to work on a new zone draft for density purposes. He's looking for some funding. Rockingham Planning Commission is doing a follow-up to the Housing Advisory forum. In September, Housing Advisory will unveil a storyboard project done pre-Covid. That committee will also do a walk around town of the sites which are options for multi-family housing.
 - ii. Ms. Gilman said at the Facilities Advisory Committee, we went over the terms of the RFP for the Facilities Assessment program. The quotes were more than approved at Town Meeting and were from businesses that are not from NH. Town Meeting approved the purchase of 10 Hampton Road after we put out the RFP, which could add to the scope of the project. We may need to narrow the scope to those facilities which are critically used, such as Town Offices and Town Hall. Ms. Gilman discussed several bills active or vetoed on the State level.
 - iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
 - iv. Ms. Oliff had no report.
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis was unable to attend the Sustainability Advisory Committee, but that group did not have a quorum. They decided not to meet in July and August so the next meeting is in September.
- e. Correspondence
- i. The annual assessment schedule from the Exeter COOP and Exeter School District.
 - ii. Correspondence from the owner of Buxton Water proposing an alternate truck route. Mr. Dean said we need to have Police and DPW review this before making a recommendation.
 - iii. A notice from Xfinity on programming changes.
 - iv. A letter to Mr. Dean regarding school safety.
 - v. Several letters regarding parking
 - vi. A notice to a property owner in Exeter of an alleged violation with NHDES. Mr. Dean said Kristin Murphy will do the follow-up.
 - vii. A DOT notice of a sale of State-owned land in Exeter at 1 Cronin Road. Mr. Dean said he talked to Economic Development and Planning and neither expressed interest. Mr. Papakonstantis asked for a letter from Mr. Sharples regarding this property.

- viii. A letter from Department of Revenue regarding completion of cyclical inspections.
- ix. A letter from a Homeowner's Association Board of Directors.

8. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next Select Board meetings are June 27, July 18, July 25, and Aug 8.

9. Other Business

- a. Ms. Belanger said if we're going to kick off the new website July 1, we have to have the new Social Media policy in place. Mr. Papakonstantis said we can discuss it at the June 27 meeting. Mr. Dean said the July 1 go-live date is something we control.
- b. Mr. Papakonstantis said Mr. Glowacky offered to do a video of chairs of various boards for marketing. Mr. Papakonstantis thinks it's a good idea, and would like Melissa Roy to be involved.

10. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this meeting.

11. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to adjourn. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary