

Select Board Meeting
Monday July 25, 2022
7 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 7 PM.

2. Board Interviews

- a. There were no board interviews conducted at this meeting.

3. Public Comment

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

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Mr. Papakonstantis recognized the Exeter Arts & Culture Commission for getting a \$20,000 grant to make improvements to the statue at Founders Park. These improvements are now complete.

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: July 18, 2022

Corrections: Mr. Papakonstantis said Donna Lane requested that in the CDBG section, we add "She noted that there were informational documents available."

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of July 18, 2022 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

7. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Poll Pads Presentation

Town Clerk Andie Kohler, Town Moderator Kate Miller, and Supervisor of the Checklist Vicky Nawoichyk were present to discuss the Poll Pads proposal. Attorney Miller said these are items like iPads that will speed up the voting process. The voter can opt to scan their NH license to bring up their information. Those who check in will get a receipt that shows their address so that they can verify any changes; vision-impaired voters can give any address changes to the clerk for them to read back. Voters will swap the receipt for the ballot, and the ballot clerks are left with a bunch of receipts so as not to rely solely on the technology. We are required to have a paper checklist for every election, which will be maintained in real time throughout the voting day, which will allow us to

switch to paper if necessary. The NH ballot law commission has approved these devices. Ms. Nawoichyk added that if anything happens, we have to be ready to switch to paper tracking in 10 minutes per the RSA.

Attorney Miller said she recommends 10 poll pads for the town. These are available from LHS of Salem NH, which already maintains our Accuvote tabulation machines. A number of NH towns are already using Poll Pads, and we heard from Barrington and Derry via Zoom that they had very positive experience with the company on training and troubleshooting. We have the option to rent or buy these devices. The rental is \$5,500 per election, while the purchase is \$18,650 plus a software update each year. There are some years in which we have lots of elections, so it's probably cheaper to own them. Ms. Kohler said the hardware has a life expectancy of 5-6 years.

Attorney Miller said these devices will speed up and streamline the voting experience significantly. People won't get bottled up and frustrated. It won't change the number of clerks we have there, because we'll still be updating the paper lists. The reports have to be done in paper, so there will actually be more work for the Supervisors of the Checklist.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if there is a way for this system to be hacked. Attorney Miller said it's on a closed wifi, and Election Net is password-protected. It's as safe as anything. Ms. Oliff said security is her only concern. Ms. Nawoichyk said it's of concern to her as well. Anything on a thumb drive can be insecure. The Secretary of State doesn't necessarily support it, which is a concern as well.

Ms. Gilman said she talked to the Town Manager in Bedford and they love this system. Ms. Belanger said she attended the Poll Pads presentation and it sounded great.

Ms. Cowan asked what would happen if the Legislative Body decided to ban something like this. She said she's also concerned about human error. Otherwise it sounds like it will make the voting process better. Attorney Miller said voting devices are approved by the Ballot Law Commission. We are not on the bleeding edge of this, as other towns have tried it. There is less human error with the Poll Pads, because clerks can scan the ID and find the correct voter. Those correlating the information will be in a quieter spot with fewer distractions.

Ms. Belanger said she has volunteered as a ballot clerk, and the current process is stressful for the workers and the residents. She's concerned because the Election Commission is allowing these to be used, but can our Secretary of State override them? Attorney Miller said the Ballot Law Commission can approve devices, but the Secretary of State can specify the report formats they will accept. We will still have a paper back up. There's no way for malicious intent to happen; it ends up correlating back to Election Net, so anyone wanting to hack the list would have to get into that system to change anything. We will still have to register people with the same proofs of identity.

Mr. Dean said in order for us to be prepared for the March Town Election, we wouldn't put this in the 2023 budget, because we'd need the Poll Pads before that. He suggested using ARPA funds for the initial cost of \$18,650.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if it's worth considering renting for the first year, in order to have less impact on ARPA funds and to determine if we like it. Attorney Miller said we could try it out in 2023 to get ready for 2024 with its extra elections. Mr. Dean said the current Elections budget has \$23,000. Mr. Papakonstantis said it would be more cautious to rent for the first year. Ms. Gilman asked if it could be used at Deliberative Session. Ms. Kohler said yes, the check-in process could be the same, although there's no ballot to hand out. Attorney Miller said there are fewer people who come to Deliberative Session, so there's less of a crush there.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked that the attorneys look at the rental contract before Select Board approval.

Bill Murphy of 18 Oak Street said regarding possible power issues mentioned earlier, the town should purchase a generator system to keep it running. There doesn't have to be a power interruption.

Ms. Belanger asked how to address this purchase with the budget process, since we'd want to use it for the same election we'd be voting for the budget in. Mr. Dean said the budget would be voted on before we get to try them. We may look at leasing for two years. ARPA funds have to be committed by 2024 and spent by 2026.

b. Public Works Department - Salem Street at Oak Street Widening

Mr. Papakonstantis said at public comment last week, a resident had some concerns about road widening, and asked to be on the agenda.

Ms. Perry said after the meeting, Paul Vlasich worked with Hoyle Tanner to look at an accommodation to not change the location of the edge of pavement along the drive entrances along 18 Oak Street. We'd still be keeping the two 12 foot widths at the intersection of Oak and Salem. In this proposal, it tapers for a short distance, at 1:25 feet ratio.

Mr. Murphy said he is concerned about his driveway and the traffic flow. Part of his concern is that he doesn't understand why they're still trying to widen this part of the intersection. People go through that intersection too fast. Trees at the edge of the roadway will be damaged by passing trucks. We should leave it narrow and make people question whether they should even be going in there.

Ms. Perry said she knows that the design recommendation from the design engineers and the Town Engineer is to maintain the same width through the intersection. The radius that's being used would typically be a 25 foot radius, but only a 10 foot radius will be used in this location to minimize the amount of encroachment. We're trying to accommodate resident concerns. The sidewalk crossings have to be there because the sidewalk doesn't continue. It was cost-prohibitive to extend sidewalks throughout. Regarding the tree, a 12 inch change

shouldn't make a big difference for an existing tree, but we can go out and take a look.

Mr. Murphy said the way the road is now has never been a problem.

Ms. Oliff said the new proposal sounds like a good compromise. Mr. Papakonstantis said he wants to make sure private property is not compromised, but this is an old town with old streets that have pressing infrastructure needs. He feels secure that town staff will do their best to complete a project that was voted on by the voters without compromising public property.

c. Outdoor Water Restrictions

Ms. Perry gave a drought update. The flow measured in Brentwood is not significantly different from the 2016 drought. We got some rain today, but thunderstorms aren't a long slow rain where things are absorbed, it runs off. It's not enough to sustain us. She recommends an increase to level 4, which prohibits all landscape watering, washing streets or impervious areas, and swimming pools over 100 gallons. This level does allow hand irrigation of residential crops, sustaining animal life, commercial businesses, grass plain turf, and grass agricultural fields. In the past, we have extended the restriction of watering to those using private wells, as allowed by RSA 41:11-d. Ms. Cowan said we should have a longer term discussion on water use.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to escalate the water use restrictions from level 2 to level 4 in accordance with the Exeter Town Ordinance 16:10 and private wells under RSA 41:11-d. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Classification Study Proposal

Mr. Dean said we are looking to review 50 non-union positions and some union positions. Ms. Roy said the labor market is challenging. The last time we looked at the classification was 2014; it should be reviewed every 5-10 years. We would like to work with MRI to review our current wage and reclassification plan for non-union and SEIU union members, not including Police and Fire at this time, as those positions are easier to compare among towns. It's a large undertaking, so we're asking to contract it out to MRI with ARPA funds. To do 75 employees would cost \$30,000.

Mr. Papakonstantis said this was one of the Board's stated goals at the goal-setting session. It's ripe for contracting out because one person can't do it. He asked if \$30,000 is for option C. Ms. Roy said yes, it reviews our process to ensure we're doing it in an appropriate manner and staying relevant.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he supports option C. This will help us attract the kind of talent we want to hire here.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to authorize \$30,000 from ARPA funds to undertake the classification study proposal from MRI, Option C, and also authorize the Town Manager to sign the contract. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 19/16/10 in the amount of \$8,000 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

The Board reviewed a memo from IT Director Andy Swanson requesting ARPA fund expenditure request. Mr. Dean said there was \$4576.14 spent for Splashtop and Zoom service related to Covid, which expenses were paid in 2022. IT has asked to reallocate these expenses to ARPA funds, as they were directly related to Covid.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the reallocation of \$4,576.14 from the Internet Services expenditure to ARPA funds. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board received a memo from the Deputy Tax Collector describing a Co-op property whose owner passed away with an outstanding water/sewer bill. The building has been demolished, and the Co-op is looking to abate the balance of \$1,694.62.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to abate the outstanding water/sewer bill for Unit A16 at Exeter Hampton Co-op for the seven quarterly outstanding bills from July 2020 - present, in the amount of \$1,694.62. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board received an application from the Parks & Rec Dept to hold the Powderkeg Festival on October 1st in Swasey Parkway. Mr. Dean said regarding the closure of Swasey Parkway, there has been a siphons project pre-bid meeting, and he will check in with Mr. Berube about a revised timeline for that work. The park should be open for this event.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the special event application from the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department for the Powderkeg Beer and Chili Festival, to be held on Swasey Parkway on October 1, 2022. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Ryiah Khan is the new School Resource Officer.
- ii. National Night Out is August 2nd.
- iii. The second tranche of ARPA funds should be in in the next couple of weeks.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Oliff had no report. She was unable to attend the sitewalk at Swasey to view trees that needed attention. The "Tune in on Tuesday" events are going well.
- ii. Ms. Cowan had no report. She asked if the town has cooling stations or centers for residents suffering in the heat. Mr. Dean said he will look into it; the Senior Center is the first place that comes to mind. Mr. Papakonstantis asked about using 10 Hampton Road for this purpose in

the future. Ms. Gilman said during ice storm power outages, the Red Cross comes in, but doesn't serve meals or anything. That was done with the schools. Ms. Belanger asked if we have buildings with generators for this purpose. Mr. Dean said he will bring it up at the Department Heads meeting on Wednesday.

- iii. Ms. Gilman said the Facilities Advisory Committee met and narrowed the scope of projects for the Facilities Condition Assessment. A new RFP will go out shortly. We have added some companies to the request. We prioritized the buildings that we want a full assessment of. She also had a Heritage Commission meeting. That group spent two years looking at defining a Park Street Heritage Neighborhood, but according to surveys and public meetings, there was no popular demand. The HDC wants to take the information and work and assemble it as a resource if another neighborhood wants to try this. She would like to know where this information should be stored. Also, the DAR wants to put up a plaque at the Winter Street Cemetery for Revolutionary War soldiers. There's a donation of a watering trough that will become a planter, and we looked at where to put it, perhaps the right of way in front of 12 Front Street. It should be on the Select Board agenda for Aug 22. The HDC heard two cases, both of which were approved: a request from the boathouse condos at 163 Water Street to replace their windows with a better product, and a garage for a house with many periods of architecture. Both applications were very thorough.
 - iv. Ms. Belanger said she attended a Work Session for the Housing Advisory walking route. Mr. Sharples is working on a map. EXTV is going to help.
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis said he had no meetings. Mr. Glowacky has started working on the promo specials for Boards and Committee volunteers, and he [Mr. Papakonstantis] did a promo on behalf of the Select Board.
- e. Correspondence
- i. A letter from the Richie McFarland Children's Center acknowledging the receipt of \$2,500 for Q1 2022.

9. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meetings are August 8, August 22, and Tuesday September 6.

10. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to enter into non-public session under 91A:311a. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote the motion passed 5-0.

The meeting went into non-public session at 8:32 PM.

11. Adjournment. The Board emerged from non public session. Ms Belanger moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Gilman. The Board stood adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell

Recording Secretary