

Select Board Meeting  
Monday August 22, 2022  
7 PM  
Nowak Room, Town Offices  
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Molly Cowan, Niko Papakonstantis, and Nancy Belanger. Julie Gilman was remote via Zoom; she stated that it was not practical for her to attend in person and she was alone in the room.

Members Absent: Lovey Roundtree Oliff

Town Manager Russ Dean was also present at this meeting

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM.

2. Swearing In - Exeter Police Department

- a. Chief Poulin introduced new Officer Jacob Hall and Ben Clouthier who is receiving a promotion to Sergeant. Deputy Town Clerk Sonya Littlefield swore Mr. Hall in as an Officer and Mr. Clouthier as Sergeant.

3. Bid Opening- Ambulance

- a. Wheeled Coach Ambulance of Winter Park Florida; total delivered cost is \$297,945.76 with a trade-in allowance of \$8,000, for a cost of \$289,945.76. They're offering a pre-payment discount of \$6,000, so the final cost is \$283,945.76.
- b. Professional Vehicles Corporation of Rumford Maine; total delivered cost of unit is \$272,154 with a trade-in allowance of \$12,500, for a total cost of unit \$259,654.
- c. Sugarloaf Ambulance - Rescue Vehicles LLC of Wilton Maine; cost is \$293,184.71 with a trade-in allowance of \$7,500, for a final cost of unit \$285,684.71.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to refer the three bids to the Fire Department for the Fire Chief to make a recommendation. Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

4. Board Interviews

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

5. Public Comment

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

6. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations/recognitions at this meeting.

7. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: August 8, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the meeting minutes of August 8, 2022 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

8. Appointments

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

9. Discussion/Action Items

a. Train Station Updates

Bob Hall of the Train Committee gave an update on the Downeaster. After a three month gap in service due to Covid, it has returned to 2019 service levels. 70% of ridership is round trips to Boston. Exeter has about 100 daily riders.

There's no public restroom on Lincoln Street, and he thinks we need to address that, as it's an obstacle for people taking the train to Exeter. Also, we no longer have a Quik-Trak Machine, so there's no way to buy tickets at the station.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked who would maintain public restrooms if they were installed. Mr. Dean said our Maintenance Department.

Mr. Papakonstantis said social media is commenting on the number of folks hanging out at the train station at night. Would the bathrooms be available 24 hours? He wants to be aware of vandalism and other issues. Mr. Hall said that other communities have hosts at the train stations who open the bathrooms just when a train is present. Mr. Hall would be willing to help put together a host program. Someone also needs to clean up trash. The town currently maintains the station and provides snow removal, so we're already spending money there.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if there is a cost projection, and Mr. Hall said no, this is just a preliminary proposal. Mr. Dean said if there's interest from the Board, he could put together a work group to get costs. We have ARPA funds that could be available for it. Mr. Papakonstantis said the consensus of the Board to go ahead with the next steps.

b. Quarterly Financial Report through June 30

Finance Director Corey Stevens gave an update on the town finances through June 30, 2022. General Fund Revenue was \$8.8M or 43% of anticipated revenue for the year, compared to \$9.6M, or 48%, as of 6/30/2021. Our major source of revenue is our property taxes. As of 6/30/2022, we had recognized 46% of our anticipated revenue, compared to 52% as of 6/30/2021. The town's portion of revenue from 6/30 billing in 2022 was \$523,000 less than in 2021. Overlays [abatements] have increased by \$60,000. Property tax revenue was lower in 2022. These are due to timing differences. Motor vehicle is down by \$41,000, and building permits are down by \$86,000 because the cost of construction in 2022 is less than in 2021. Grant revenue is down by \$13,000. This is offset by an increase in Department income in \$50,000. There's a \$755,000 variance year over year.

The General Fund operating expenses were at \$8.63M, or 42.3% of the operating budget, compared to \$8.3M or 41.7% in 2021. General Government

was \$513,000 spent. Finance was \$459,000 spent, or 45%. IT spending was 39% of budget; hardware and software costs and contract spending were below expectation, but the department expects to have that spent out by year end. Tax Collection is 45% spent. There were timing issues on some budget lines. Planning and building were at \$243,000 spent, or 43%. Police were at \$1.797M spent, or 46% of budget. Open positions led to wage, taxes and benefits below expectation. Fire was at \$1.782M spent, or 45% of budget. There were several staff vacancies in Fire at the beginning of the year, but only one is remaining as of 6/30. The Health Department is 44% spent, due to timing of spending on lines such as mosquito control. Public works is \$2.1M spent, or 37% of the budget, which is in line with 2021 spending. There were open positions and lines which won't get spent until the latter part of the year. Administration was 35% spent, with two open positions at the beginning of the year. Highways and Streets was 25% spent. Solid waste disposal was 38% spent, with some encumbrances. This is also due to the timing of payments to our solid waste contractor. General Maintenance was at 36% of budget spent; they were down a tech position in the first part of the year. The \$100,000 maintenance project budget is still being rolled out.

Parks and Rec was \$288,000 spent, or 45% of budget with \$31,000 encumbered. Parks had two open positions at the beginning of the year, resulting in a greater use of contract services. Debt Service was \$180,000 spent, or 13% of budget, as the first payment is only interest while the second payment is principal and interest. Capital leases was at \$82,000 spent; we have not replaced vehicles for \$110,000 yet, due to timing and supply line issues.

The Water Fund had a net operating income of \$340,000, compared to \$215,000 in midyear 2021. Operating revenue was \$1.9M, or 45% of anticipated revenue, vs \$1.7M in 2021. There was a rate increase in July 2021. Operating expenses were at \$1.59M, or 37% of operating budget, similar to 2021. The Capital Outlay budget was unspent, but the budget is in process of initiating projects for that line.

The Sewer Fund had an operating income of \$2.34M, compared to \$1.95M as of midyear 2021. Revenues were at \$3.26M, or 45% of anticipated revenue. We received our first State Aid Grant payment to go towards the wastewater treatment debt service of \$1.4M. Expenses were at \$1.28M, or 17% of operating budget, compared to \$1.22M or 17% in 2021, due to timing of debt payments.

CATV had a net deficit as called for by the budget, but it was higher than anticipated at \$46,000. We've only received one franchise fee payment instead of 2. This is typical. Mr. Papakonstantis said this is becoming a more significant problem annually. Mr. Dean said the the time has come to hone in on the franchise fee and potentially change the percentage going to the CATV fund. It could be a discussion during budget season. It would require a town vote to change. Expenses are tracking as we'd expect, around 50%.

Mr. Stevens continued with the report. The Rec Revolving Fund, had operating revenue of \$388,000 at mid-year 2022, or 83% of anticipated revenue, compared to \$306,000 in 2021, or 53%. Rec is open for business. There were \$12,000 in sponsorship fees, or 241% of the budget. Expenses were at \$137,000, or 34% of budget for the year, compared to \$63,000 or 12% in 2021.

EMS Fund revenue was at \$278,000, or 50% of anticipated, vs \$268,000 or 47% in 2021. Operating Expenses were at \$126,000, or 34% of budget, vs \$147,000 or 39% of budget at midyear 2021.

c. Transfer of Water-Sewer Impact Fees

Finance Director Corey Stevens discussed a memo regarding a transfer of Water-Sewer Impact Fees. In 2019, separate Water and Sewer Impact bank accounts were opened and have been accumulating a balance, which can be used towards paying down debt. He proposed taking the 2019 and 2020 impact fee activity from Water and Sewer and moving them to Impact Funds, so we can pay down debt with it.

Mr. Dean said to use the language “release” impact fees in the motion.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to release \$197,870.66 of respective Water and Sewer Impact Fees collected in 2019 and 2020 to their respective funds; the breakdown represents \$63,160.86 to the Water Impact Fee account and \$134,709.80 to the Sewer Impact Fee account. Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

d. Public Safety Facility Project Updates

Town Planner Dave Sharples, Police Chief Stephan Poulin, Deputy Chief Josh McCain, and Rob Robicsek from Lavallee Brensinger Architects (LBA) were present to discuss the Public Safety Facility project.

Mr. Sharples said we reviewed a host of options to site a new Fire/Police Station, including 6 Continental Drive, a town-owned parcel. Through these discussions, we developed conceptual plans for a new Police Station and Fire sub-station, and the Select Board decided to move forward with plans and estimates. There's also a question of what to do with 20 Court Street; we could raze or renovate the site. We asked LBA to look at a renovation of \$4M or less. We could expect to get 40+ years out of new construction or 15-20 years from a renovation. These estimates are 2022 dollars but the buyout is probably 2024, so there is an escalator included. We also asked LBA to cost out a net-zero energy approach, and he [Mr. Sharples] is considering with Kristen Murphy some new funding options to offset costs for energy improvements.

Mr. Robicsek presented the proposal. LBA did an assessment of the existing building in December 2021; looked at alternate sites; and worked with the Chiefs and their command staff on a building program. They looked at a new Police facility on Continental with a Fire substation, with either a renovation for Fire in the existing facility or a new facility at the existing site. The Continental Drive works well: there are more than 2 means of ingress and egress and secured parking. This would be a two-story facility. A combined facility for Police

and Fire could save 5-15% of space. He discussed features of the concept drawing. LBA worked with a professional cost estimator, who estimated \$12.9M-13.8M, although those numbers are for 2022. There's been an escalation of 9% over the last two years, so 2024 construction is estimated at 15%. This would be a LEED silver building. We could do net zero, but the payback is aggressive.

Regarding a potential renovation of 20 Court Street, he's not sure what we could do for \$4M all in. LBA looked at the space program to see how it could fit into this facility once the Police and some Fire operations move to Continental. The building footprint would not change. We'd create a spot for the Historic Steam Engine. Very little sitework would be done. There would be some walls removed and minor internal construction, as well as cosmetic updates. Renovating the mechanicals would be an additional \$1.3M. The addition for the steam engine would be \$180,000. The replacement of windows and doors would be \$380,000. Adding an elevator would be \$380,000. Upgrading the exterior envelope would be \$180,000.

Regarding a potential new Fire Station at Court Street, LBA proposes a one-story Fire facility, because having only one story enhances response time. Mr. Robicsek discussed features of the concept drawings. The budget would be \$10.8 - 11.5M, plus an escalation of 15%. It would be functional for 20+ years.

Ms. Belanger asked how many Fire personnel would be on Continental. Chief Wilking said there would be 4 firefighters downtown and 3 at Continental, with room for 5 and 5. Ms. Belanger asked if there's enough room on the site to expand if necessary. Mr. Robicsek said there could be a third bay, but it would take away public parking and Fire felt that 2 were sufficient.

Ms. Belanger asked why secured parking is necessary. Mr. Robicsek said the security and safety of Police Officers has become an issue in the last 5-10 years. Current design practice is to provide separate parking for public and staff. Chief Poulin said we don't want armed Officers or prisoners intermingling with the public. It's just a fence with a gate, so it's not that much of a cost. Mr. Robicsek said regarding the 2nd floor layout, certain Police areas must be secure for CALEA [Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies] certification. Chief Poulin said CALEA accreditation will soon become the norm throughout the country. It's best practice going forward. It assures you that we have tested and true policies and the Officers are following them.

Ms. Belanger asked where we could have a Police presence downtown. We can't use the Wheelwright Room. Mr. Robicsek said a small touchdown space at the Fire facility is an option with either a renovation or a new building.

Ms. Belanger asked about the phased approach. Mr. Robicsek said when the Police move out, we can renovate those areas first. It would be a three-phase approach.

Ms. Gilman asked about the lifetime of a renovation vs a new building. Mr. Robicsek said at \$4M and under, it's a shorter-term solution. If you're going to be in the building longer, you need to make it more energy efficient and upgrade the mechanicals. It has a lot of idiosyncrasies in the way it was laid out.

Mr. Papakonstantis opened the discussion to the public.

Renay Allen, Chair of the Energy Committee, said the committee likes the add-on of net zero. The Committee would like to pledge its support to work on energy measures and clean energy for this facility.

Amy Farnham of 3 Little River Road, also of the Energy Committee, said these are great plans and it looks like there's some flexibility to do energy efficiency measures. Would it be an extra cost of 3-4% for net zero? Mr. Robicsek said this is just a concept design. 3-4% is a ballpark, because we'd need to design the whole thing to find the true cost. Ms. Farnham said we should be conscious of the roofline when we design so it will accommodate solar panels, and keep other energy ideas in mind.

Ms. Belanger said we need to communicate with the public to keep them informed about this project.

Ms. Cowan asked about next steps. Mr. Dean said it would go to the BRC as a proposed Capital Improvements project. Mr. Papakonstantis said he'd like to hear more from the community about what people want or don't want. Ms. Belanger said she thought the building on 20 Court Street could be used as housing or storage if needed.

Mr. Dean asked if the Board had a preference between renovating and building at the current Public Safety complex, and Mr. Papakonstantis said he'd like to see the process play out with the BRC and the public.

Mr. Sharples said some answers regarding net zero and design will come later, once the project has further approval from the voters.

Mr. Sharples said we had a public forum that wasn't very well attended. Does the Board have any suggestions on how to get public input? Mr. Papakonstantis said we could have it be part of a Select Board meeting, and involve EXTV. Mr. Dean suggested having a special place for it on the town website.

## 10. Regular Business

### a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a tax abatement for 104/79/139 in the following amounts and years: \$786.90 for 2019; \$830.29 for 2020; \$819.31 for 2021; and \$423.53 for 2018. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a tax abatement for 64/105/15 in the amount of \$260 for tax year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 83/25 in the amount of \$7,500 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

### b. Permits & Approvals

Mr. Papakonstantis said Chief Wilking has asked that we reconsider a motion made at the July 18th, 2022 meeting. Chief Wilking, who was present, said we were

notified last week that the grant we sought for \$13,300 to upgrade the public safety facility security and fencing is mired in legal because of the language that NH Division of Emergency Management provided. The motion said that the max amount is \$13,300, which meant that they could only give us half of that. The new language includes the figure \$26,600.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the terms of the Emergency Management Performance Grant as amended, and the Exeter Select Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$26,600, in which the town will be responsible for a 50% match, which is \$13,300. The Select Board also authorizes the Town Manager to sign the grant application. Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Water restrictions are continuing. There is no outdoor watering. We have been asked for a waiver by the Primrose School project, but we don't anticipate offering any waivers.
- ii. Two new employees at EXTV started today.
- iii. He attended a productive GIS user meeting last week. We have some issues with GIS that we're working on getting fixed.
- iv. We're investigating tax credits through the Inflation Reduction Act for the solar array.
- v. COAST has had a Covid outbreak, which may curtail service temporarily.
- vi. The filming of volunteer recruitment PSAs continues.
- vii. Ms. Gilman issued something about SB169, a commission to study double poles. We'll ask around for a willing participant from Exeter.
- viii. The Departments are working on FY 23 budgets.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if there had been any update from Attorney Mitchell on Swasey Parkway, but there had not.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we have posted for the position of DPW Director. Mr. Dean said no, we're in the final stages of putting together a recruitment package for the position.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Gilman attended HDC, which approved the proposal for changes at 154 Water Street. This is the first time the HDC used the big screen at a meeting. The Heritage Commission discussed a vote on the watering trough that was donated, regarding where we recommend putting it.
- ii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- iii. Ms. Belanger had a Conservation Commission meeting where they discussed a draft deed for Rose Farm, which has 6.13+ acres of conservation land. It should be coming before the Select Board if it passes the Attorney. The Planning Board had its first meeting on draft CIP; the next CIP meeting is this Thursday. The Housing Advisory

Committee meeting finalized the plans for the 1.5 mile walking tour, "Housing Hiding in Plain Sight."

- iv. Mr. Papakonstantis said the River Advisory Committee was postponed. He attended the Budget Recommendations Committee kickoff.

e. Correspondence

- i. A letter from the DOT notifying Exeter of a one-time payment of \$257,238.27 for Block Grant Aid. Mr. Dean said this will be extra paving money.
- ii. A memo from Conservation and Sustainability Planner Kristen Murphy regarding the Raynes Barn Improvement RFP. The March 27 RFP had no responses; another RFP was issued which had 2 responses, but we're looking out a couple of years, so we're reformulating the RFP to focus on structural repairs.
- iii. A Legislative Bulletin from NHMA.

11. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meeting is Tuesday, September 6th. The following Tuesday is the election. There will be meetings September 19, as well as September 26 to present the draft budget before it goes to the Budget Recommendations Committee.

12. Non-Public Session

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0. The meeting entered non-public session at 10 PM.

- 13. Adjournment. Selectwoman Gilman moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectwoman Belanger. The meeting adjourned at 10:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary