

Select Board Meeting  
Tuesday October 11, 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 and Nancy Belanger. Town Manager Russ Dean and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were also present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:45 PM.

2. Non Public Session - RSA 91-A:3II(a). Selectwoman Belanger moved to go into non public session under RSA 91-A:3(2)a. Selectwoman Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

The Board emerged from non public session.

3. Bid Award: Fire Department Ambulance

Fire Chief Eric Wilking said he recommends purchasing a Wheel Coach Ambulance from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles. We sent an RFP out to four dealers and got four bids back. Greenwood was the second lowest at \$289,486; we chose them because their offering is an ambulance that's large enough to serve the FD and town well, and the company is the same one we're buying our Fire Apparatus from. Greenwood is offering a pre-payment discount of \$6,000. We're also trading in an AEV Ambulance. The final delivered cost would be \$283,946.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the recommendation of Chief Wilking to purchase the Greenwood emergency vehicle from Wheelcoach Ambulance for the final price of \$283,945.76, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any appropriate agreements. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Chief Wilking mentioned that the purchase of the Ambulance will come from the Ambulance Revolving Fund.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Proclamations/Recognitions - Community Media Day

- a. Ms. Gilman read the Community Media Day proclamation:

*Whereas, The sharing of ideas and information helps to build common understanding and common values, and is critical for the healthy functioning of a diverse community;*

*And Whereas, community media organizations provide people with the skills, equipment and facilities necessary for the creation and sharing of stories, knowledge, and ideas through media;*

*And Whereas, community media is an important resource for participating in local democratic policy and processes, and keeps local government transparent and accessible;*

*And Whereas, people will benefit from an increased awareness of the diverse and valuable programming on public, education, and government access channels or digital platforms;*

*And Whereas, Exeter TV plays a vital role in the building our community by encouraging conversations about our common interests, increasing discourse around policy issues, fostering an understanding of local cultures, and sharing information to improve our lives;*

*Now, therefore, I, Niko Papakonstantis, Select Board Chair of the Town of Exeter, do hereby proclaim October 20, 2022 as Community Media Day within the Town of Exeter, NH. All people are hereby called upon to promote the importance of community media, the availability of the public access channel to be used by the public, and programming available on Exeter TV's broadcast channels 13, 22, and 98 as well as its many digital platforms.*

*In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town of Exeter to be affixed this 11th day of October of the year of our Lord Two Thousand and*

*Twenty-Two.*

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: September 26, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of September 26, 2022 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments and Resignations

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the resignation of Kathleen McDougal from the Trustees of the Trust Funds. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

8. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Fire Department Updates – Eric Wilking, Fire Chief

Chief Wilking said the FD had eight people leave, and we worked all year to hire to replace them. We're now in good shape both in personnel and morale. As of October 17, we will be fully staffed. We've been hit with supply chain issues. We ordered an engine from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles after the Town Meeting vote in March; there have been some delays, and we now anticipate getting it in July 2023. We're still hopeful that Ford will complete the build of an F250 Pickup Truck by the end of November. The Breathing Apparatus are still stuck, but the vendor believes they can get them to us by the end of November. We hadn't budgeted to maintain, service, and test the existing units, so the vendor offered to come in and service and test them free of charge. From the Ambulance budget, we had sought a new vehicle extrication tool to replace one that was 25 years old, and we took delivery of that September 29. Chief Pizon requested funds through a GOFER grant for two stretcher loading systems, and they were installed last week. We're finding that creating a relationship with a vendor that will step up when we need them is proving to be far more beneficial than going with the lowest bid. Regarding the budget, we moved money within the expense lines for turnout gear. We had budgeted for 6-7 sets of gear but had to buy 12 sets to cover the new hires, at \$3,200 a set. The 2010 Emergency 1 Engine, which is not scheduled for replacement until 2030, needed \$16,000 in engine work this year. Fire call volume is down by 300, attributable to the decommissioning of the Fire System and line-based false alarms. The EMS calls have risen by 200, many due to senior issues. We've

had 250 more transports, which generate revenue. In Emergency Management, we're seeking every dollar we can; through August 31 of this year, we've been approved for grants of almost \$88,000. The EMPG Grant for upgrades to the existing Public Safety complex was approved. We're working with the architects, town staff and committees on the new Public Safety Complex. We're considering hosting an open house at the Fire House.

Ms. Belanger said she supports the idea of an open house. Ms. Cowan said the FD should work with town committees to promote engagement.

Health Officer James Murray gave an update. Inspection services have resumed, and revenue is up this year over last year. Fewer Homestead licenses were issued this year. Some new childcare facilities are opening up in town, and he's been working with them to meet State guidelines. Some food establishments have opened as well, and there's been more interest in opening restaurants. Nuisance complaints have increased. Rats are the most common issue, but any town where a river runs through the downtown will have a rat problem. Keeping a well-maintained yard without bird feeders or trash will help keep rats out. There have been some water quality issues and noise complaints. Mosquitos were manageable this year because of the drought conditions. Our contractor, Dragon Mosquito, found no samples positive for EEE [Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus], West Nile virus, or Jamestown Canyon virus this year. Regarding Covid-19, the State isn't updating the numbers as frequently. Cases have been relatively flat through September and October. We're still recommending that residents get vaccines or boosters as appropriate.

Ms. Cowan asked if Mr. Murray could describe any lessons learned to prepare for the next pandemic, especially for those who are housing- and food-insecure. Mr. Murray said communication has been a big lesson learned from the pandemic. How and when we communicate about epidemics of any sort is vital. The CDC is still working on their after-report.

Ms. Belanger asked if we're doing a vaccine booster clinic for town employees. Mr. Murray said we no longer have the refrigeration capabilities to hold vaccines. A lot of vaccination is now through pharmacies and doctors.

b. Solar Array Update – Dave Sharples, Town Planner

Mr. Sharples said in his last update, he discussed that he was pursuing two approaches: a contract for a smaller 1.3 MW system at a price within the bonding

authority from Town Meeting, or \$3.62M, and also the exploration of a new warrant article to construct a 1.77 MW system which would fully utilize the landfill site. He worked with Revision Energy and our independent consultant to determine that the town should not pursue the contract for the smaller system, since the return on investment is tight and the connection cost and site preparation cost are very high. However, the construction of the larger system is worth pursuing. He would like to continue working with Revision on estimates and create a new warrant article for the March Town Meeting. The cost will be offset by the 30% tax credit offer. Utility costs are going up, which makes the solar array more attractive.

Mr. Papakonstantis opened the discussion for public comment.

Cliff Sinnott of the Energy Committee said the Committee thinks continuing with this project is important.

c. ARPA Update – Melissa Roy, Assistant Town Manager

Melissa Roy gave an update on ARPA funding. We received \$1.6M, and the Board has approved projects totaling \$863,626, which leaves us with \$736,374. We have until 2024 to commit the funds and through 2026 to spend them. Various departments brought forward projects for potential funding, such as the Town Hall HVAC, the Town Offices office creation project, Town Hall Chair Replacement, a Town Hall sound and lighting update, work on the Swasey Parkway closure, purchasing a new ambulance, purchasing Police Department tasers, the Planet Playground land purchase, a re-keying of Town Hall, polling pads for elections, and intersection improvements. Tasers would be \$22,000 a year for 5 years, so ARPA would pay for \$110,000 for tasers. The new balance would be \$625,000. For the rest of the projects, we propose waiting through the budget process and get more solid numbers.

Mr. Papakonstantis said anything that could be part of the budget, such as IT needs, should be in the budget instead of coming from ARPA. He would like to see it used to buy a piece of property that will benefit the town for decades. We don't have to commit the funds until 2024, and we've had emergency projects come up before.

Ms. Belanger said she thinks it's important to work on Town Hall, but she would like to hear about other funding options for that. For tasers, she'd like to see that go into the budget. For the Town Office second floor, we need a more in-depth conversation. It's important because there are issues with the confidentiality and

privacy of HR discussions. The Planet Playground land purchase is fine, but not necessarily the renovation. We need to renovate 10 Hampton Road, but there's money set aside for that already.

Ms. Gilman said she's in favor of improving Town Hall and putting the money towards things that will improve the quality of life in town. We should have a meeting with representatives of several committees and the consultant about Town Hall. One source of revenue could be selling the benches at Town Hall. We should move Swasey Parkway to the top of the list. Ms. Roy said we had a meeting with stakeholders about Town Hall a few months ago, and determined that the HVAC was the next thing to address. Ms. Gilman said she wanted the Heritage Commission involved in future meetings. Ms. Belanger suggested using rental fees for Town Hall towards this project. Mr. Dean said there's a newly created fund with \$5,000 in it for this purpose. Mr. Papakonstantis said he'd like to see another warrant article to appropriate to that fund, possibly as an annual warrant article. Perhaps the Arts & Culture Commission could recommend an amount.

Ms. Cowan said she would put Town Hall higher than Swasey Parkway. Is there a way to get matching funds for any projects?

Mr. Papakonstantis said he would like to hear another estimate on the Town Hall HVAC.

Ms. Belanger said she would like to hear costs on the Town Office second floor office space project, and Ms. Roy said we just got proposal drawings back and can discuss the ideas with Maintenance.

d. Grant Acceptance: NHDES Watershed Assistance Grant, BMP Site Development, WISE Advanced Septic Program

Town Engineer Paul Vlasich said the town was awarded a \$45,000 Watershed Assistance Grant. With this grant, we will implement three components of our Adaptive Management nitrogen plan: to retrofit the stormwater system with nutrient removing components; look into incentivizing more advanced septic systems for greater nitrogen removal; and aid in education for healthy lawns program for fertilizer reduction. The total project cost would be \$94,260, which includes \$2,860 of his time. Mr. Papakonstantis asked about the funding for the rest, and Mr. Vlasich said it's being considered from town ARPA funds.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the \$45,000 Watershed Assistance Grant and authorize the Town Manager to sign any documents relative to this grant. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

e. Polling Pads Funding – Russ Dean, Town Manager

Mr. Papakonstantis said that previously, the Board had agreed with the Town Moderator, Town Clerk, and the Supervisor of the Checklist that Polling Pads should be purchased in time for the March 2023 elections. The Board asked the Town Manager to find money in the 2022 budget.

Mr. Dean said the cost is \$19,400. We reviewed the budget and there's an anticipated surplus in the Parks Health Insurance line due to vacancies. The budget was \$46,813 vs \$13,952 spent, so the anticipated surplus could cover the cost of the polling pads. There will be a transfer of money from this line to the Elections budget. In the future, there will be a line in the Elections budget to cover ongoing costs. Ms. Belanger asked that we keep good notes on this for transparency in the budget process.

**MOTION (not voted):** Ms. Gilman moved to reallocate \$19,400 from the Parks Health Insurance line to be placed in the Elections budget line to reflect the entire cost of the Polling Pads. Ms. Belanger seconded.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman amended the motion to the following: Ms. Gilman moved to reallocate \$19,400 from the Parks Health Insurance line to be placed in the Elections budget line to reflect the entire cost of the Polling Pads, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any necessary documents. Ms. Belanger seconded. The amended motion passed 5-0.

f. Riverwoods Tax Agreements

Mr. Dean said this is an annual agreement that the town and Riverwoods enter into regarding taxation of the campuses at Riverwoods: The Ridge, The Woods, and The Boulders. There haven't been any changes to the agreement this year. The residential units will pay the full tax rate; the buildings for health care residents will not pay any tax; and the remainder of land and buildings will pay the full tax rate.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve the PILOT [Payment in Lieu of Taxes] agreement with the Riverwoods Company of Exeter for The Woods, The Ridge, and The Boulders as of October 11, 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

g. Swasey Parkway Update

Ms. Roy said last year on the town warrant, the residents voted to support moving forward with the conversation on closing Swasey Parkway from the Pavilion north, with two conditions: approval from NH Charitable Trust, and approval from Probate Court. We have been working with Town Counsel and Tom Donovan, the former Director of the Charitable Trust, who has now retired. Diane Quinlan, the new Director, has been asked for a final decision whether the proposal that was put on the warrant will stand muster for what we are looking to do. We hope for an answer in the next week or two. After that, if they support the closing of the Parkway, we will file our petition with Probate Court.

9. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 80/17/11 in the amount of \$25,000 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 85/46 in the amount of \$12,000 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 71/82 in the amount of \$16,000 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit for 71/82 in the amount of \$500 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

Mr. Dean said this is a retroactive approval of the Highway Safety Grant for \$10,560.22.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the Office of Highway Safety Grant agreement in the amount of \$10,560.22. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

i. Mr. Dean said we received a 1.5% decrease in Health insurance, where



we had budgeted a 7.5% increase. This represents a reduction to the General Fund budget of \$237,221. There's a 2% increase in Dental, but that's not a large amount.

- ii. The Water/Sewer Rate study is underway. He's working with Bob Kelly and Corey Stevens on that.
- iii. He had an interview with NH Magazine today about Exeter. It will be a profile piece in the next issue.
- iv. The audit had an unqualified opinion, which is the highest you can get.
- v. He attended a Health Trust meeting on October 4th.
- vi. He met with the Coastal Waters Charter School along with the Fire Department and the Code Enforcement Officer. There's been some concern about the tents they've put up with their students. They will move ahead with plans to renovate the building.
- vii. Mr. Papakonstantis asked that the town website post the regularly scheduled meetings for the next 12 months.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Oliff had no report.
- ii. Ms. Gilman had no report.
- iii. Ms. Belanger attended a Master Plan subcommittee meeting where they talked about the zoning review the Town Planner is working on. The Housing Advisory Committee meeting for this week has been canceled due to scheduling conflicts.
- iv. Mr. Papakonstantis attended a Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting. They are finalizing a proposed single-use plastic ordinance, and will request that the Board take it up for three public hearings. It would only be for town buildings and town properties, not restaurants and private businesses. They are also working on revising their charge and redefining sustainability. Any change would have to come through the Select Board. They've created subcommittees, one of which was answering concerns about the plastic ordinance and one of which is creating 3 or 4 sustainable initiatives for the town.

e. Correspondence

- i. A notice about the Executive Counsel offering \$15M in State emergency fuel assistance.
- ii. Several emails from the same author who interviewed Mr. Dean for NH Magazine. Mr. Papakonstantis also spoke to her for half an hour.

10. Review Board Calendar

The next meetings are October 24, November 14, November 21, December 5, and December 19.

11. Non-Public Session

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

12. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary