

Select Board Meeting  
Monday July 10, 2023  
6:20 PM  
Nowak Room, Town Offices  
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, 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 6:20 PM.

2. Non-Public Session

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(a). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0. The meeting entered non-public at 6:20. The Board emerged from non public session. Motion by Selectman Chartrand to seal the minutes until the action is completed, seconded by Selectwoman Belanger. Motion carries unanimously.

3. Board Interviews

- a. Keith Whitehouse for the Conservation Commission

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7:03 PM.

4. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Park and Recreation Month

Ms. Gilman read the proclamation:

*Whereas parks and recreation programs are an integral part of communities throughout this country, including the Town of Exeter; and*

*Whereas parks and recreation promotes health and wellness, improving the physical and mental health of people who live near parks; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation promotes time spent in nature, which positively impacts mental health by increasing cognitive performance and well-being, and alleviating illnesses such as depression, attention deficit disorders, and Alzheimers; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation encourages physical activities by providing space for popular sports, hiking trails, swimming pools and many other activities designed to promote active lifestyles; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation is a leading provider of healthy meals, nutrition services, and education; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation programming and education activities, such as out-of-school time programming, youth sports and environmental education, are critical to childhood development; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation increases a community's economic prosperity through increased property values, expansion of the local tax base, increased tourism, the attraction and retention of businesses, and crime reduction; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation is fundamental to the environmental well-being of our community; and*

*Whereas, parks and recreation is essential and adaptable infrastructure that makes our communities resilient in the face of natural disasters and climate change; and*

*Whereas, our parks and natural recreation areas ensure the ecological beauty of our community and provide a place for children and adults to connect with nature and recreate outdoors; and*

*Whereas, the US House of Representatives has designated July as Parks and Recreation Month; and*

*Whereas, the Town of Exeter recognizes the benefits derived from parks and recreation resources.*

*Now therefore be it resolved by the Exeter Select Board that July is hereby recognized as Park and Recreation Month in the Town of Exeter.*

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Emergency Meeting: June 26, 2023 called under RSA 91A311(b)

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the meeting minutes of June 26, 2023 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- b. Regular Meeting: June 27, 2023

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 27, 2023. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments

- a. Conservation Commission

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Keith Whitehouse as a regular voting member of the Conservation Commission, term to expire April 30, 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Health Officer

Mr. Papakonstantis said that every three years, the town is required to renew the Health Officer Position. The term for James Murray will expire on July 23, 2023.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint James Murray as the Health Officer, term to expire in 3 years, under RSA 128. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

8. Resignations

a. Stacey Rogers from the Sustainability Advisory Committee

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand made a motion to accept the resignation of Stacey Rogers from the Sustainability Advisory Committee. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

9. Discussion/Action Items

a. Public Hearing: Special Town Meeting Bond Article

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

Mr. Papakonstantis read the notice of the public hearing:

*Notice of Public Hearing, Town of Exeter 2023 Special Town Meeting Bond Article. The Exeter Select Board hereby gives notice of a public hearing pursuant to RSA 33:8-a on the following project requiring a bond and note as part of the Special Town Meeting warrant article: Installation of Two 12 Inch Siphons from Jady Hill to Main Pump Station, \$3,500,000. The public hearing of Tuesday, June 27, 2023 has been continued to Monday, July 10 2023 at 7 PM in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Dated June 28, 2023.*

Mr. Papakonstantis read the Town Warrant:

*To the inhabitants of the Town of Exeter, in the County of Rockingham, in the said State, qualified to vote in Town affairs:*

*First Session: You are hereby notified that the first session (the Deliberative Session) of the Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 beginning at 7 PM at the Town Hall, 9 Front Street, Exeter, NH. The first session will consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of the following warrant article, and will also afford voters who are present the opportunity to propose, debate and adopt amendments to the warrant article.*

*Second Session: The second session of the Special Town Meeting, to vote on the special warrant article as it may have been amended at the first session, will be held on Tuesday, August 15 2023 at the Talbot Gymnasium at the Tuck Learning Center, 30*

*Linden Street, Exeter, NH. Polls for voting by official ballot will open at 7 AM and close at 8 PM.*

*Special Article 1 - Installation of Two 12 Inch Siphons from Jady Hill to Main Pump Station, \$3,500,000. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three million, five hundred thousand, and zero dollars (\$3,500,000) for the purpose of installation of two 12 inch siphons from Jady Hill to the Main Pump Station, and to authorize the Select Board to enter into a loan agreement of up to \$3,500,000 through New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Clean Water State Revolving Fund for this purpose. The loan will be repaid as follows: a 10% forgiven by agreement with NHDES, and \$3,150,000 sewer fees over 10 years. (Estimated Tax Impact: no tax impact, sewer funds plus 10% loan forgiveness.) A 3/5 ballot vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none.

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

Mr. Chartrand said the Deliberative Session is 7 PM tomorrow at Town Hall.

Mr. Papakonstantis said that on June 26, 2023, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve the special warrant article, but the Board should reaffirm that vote.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to reaffirm the warrant article as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Procedural Defect Meeting: September 5th

Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy said there's a specific State set of guidelines for special town meetings that require public notices to be posted in certain locations and time frames. In May, we missed one of the 24 hour deadlines, and we let the judge know we would be seeking to have a procedural defect meeting in September. This is our way to fix the missed posting in the appropriate legal way.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he was at the hearing, and the Judge felt confident that the town was taking steps to address this.

Ms. Roy said we will post this similar to a special town meeting, but the Deliberative Session and voting are in the same session. The polls will be open for one hour. It's a yes or no vote on whether to accept the correction. It can be held at the Town Offices or Town Hall.

Mr. Papakonstantis said this does not affect the Deliberative Session of July 11 or the vote of August 15. Ms. Roy said that's correct, you do this after you have your vote.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the public hearing would be at the regular Select Board meeting of August 21st and the special Town Meeting would be Tuesday September 5th.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to hold a procedural defect special town meeting on September 5th, 2023, time and location TBD, and schedule a public hearing on August 21st, 2023. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Community Power Aggregation Report

Lew Hitzrot of the Community Power Aggregation Committee gave an update on the community power program. The total customers served by CPCNH is now 76,003, making them the largest supplier of power in NH. Out of 76,000, the opt-outs were only 353. In Exeter, there are about 7,000 total enrollees, with 41 opting out. Exeter residents saved \$1,278,357 in 3 months, and we're putting close to \$1M in the reserve fund. New rates will go into effect August 1st, and there's still a savings between Unitils rate and Granite Basic, the lowest tier. Going forward, we would like to address the concerns about net metering data. This relates to those who produce more energy than they use, such as with solar panels. The utilities are not providing the necessary data to monetize that. The committee sent a letter to CPCNH in support of their efforts to get the PUC to examine this issue and get a resolution. It's a complicated situation without any quick resolution. The joint Utilities sent a letter to the PUC explaining why it's inappropriate for them to supply the necessary data. CPCNH has put together a sheet to explain to net metering customers whether they would still benefit from Community Power. The committee also plans to do an opt-up initiative to promote choosing a supply rate with more renewable energy.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if the town can enhance the website with more information about opting up. He also suggested using EXTV and the bi-weekly newsletter. Mr. Dean said the sample utility bill is a powerful tool which we may be able to do more with. Mr. Hitzrot asked about where to put posters besides the Library and Town Offices.

Ms. Cowan suggested working with Kristin Murphy on potential grants. Mr. Hitzrot said we've worked with Kristin a lot, but not in this area. Ms. Cowan said the town should be supporting this with some budget and advertising component. Mr. Hitzrot said he's worried about it seeming like the town is pushing this, so it might be better if the initiative came from somewhere else.

d. CDFA Grant Award: 10 Hampton Road

Parks and Rec Director Greg Bisson said we were awarded the Community Center Investment Program grant for \$841,240. Previously the Select Board voted to allocate \$155,000 towards a match. We have an RFP out for Architectural and Engineering services. Hopefully we will be back in a few months for a construction RFP. He's asking for approval for himself to sign any documents that may need to be signed. We need to start the construction project within 6 months.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the Community Center Investment Program Grant from the Community Development Finance Authority on behalf of the town of Exeter Multigenerational Community Center in the amount of up to \$841,240 and to further authorize

the Town Manager or his designee to sign all appropriate papers. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

e. 2023 Classification and Compensation Plan

Mr. Dean said we hired MRI to do a classification and compensation analysis for the town. Includes a revised list of classifications and grades for the non-union group. A total of 20 grades are proposed, which matches the current grading systems. Some positions have been moved in terms of grades. The non-union pay plan was recommended by MRI and vetted by the Finance Director, Town Manager, and HR Director and reflects a 75% market valuation.

Ms. Roy said we looked at a group of communities comparable to Exeter and put us into the 75th % of market. We can't compete with some of the larger cities, but this will get us in a wage range that is competitive.

Mr. Dean said we're recommending this as option 2 out of the 3 options we presented to the Board.

Mr. Papakonstantis said it's easier to do an exercise like this than have to re-recruit and re-train as folks leave. Retaining the current staff is a priority.

Ms. Gilman said she thinks this is a better grouping of which positions are in what grade.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the Exeter non-union proposed FY 2023 classifications grades as presented in Option 2, effective July 30, 2023, and further accept the non-union pay plan as proposed in option 2, effective July 30, 2023. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

10. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to abate taxes on 111/5/7 in the amount of \$223.62 for tax year 2021, \$225.07 for tax year 2020, \$214.30 for tax year 2019, and \$165.05 for tax year 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

i. There were no permits or approvals considered at this time.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. He worked on reclassification and wages as discussed.
- ii. He sat in on an CPCNH meeting on electricity and rates.
- iii. Patrick Mulholland retired as a detective June 30, but will continue to serve as our Police Prosecutor in a civilian role.
- iv. Property taxes were due July 3, and we are 91% collected as of Friday.
- v. Regarding the assessment ratio, our assessments are 67.3% of market, in 2024 we'll be seeing an adjustment to those values. They should be around 95-97% of market.

- vi. The siphons project has progress, they're looking to pull the pipe through on Wednesday.
  - vii. He's starting CIP meetings, with three today. They're coming along well. We're contemplating how to deal with the Police Station/Fire Substation again.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports
- i. Ms. Belanger said the Exeter Historical Society has an upcoming exhibition in September and they're looking for a Select Board photograph. She would like to have that done at the next meeting. Mr. Dean said he can arrange for someone to be here to take a photo. Mr. Papakonstantis asked that the photo on the website from 2019 also be changed.
  - ii. Ms. Gilman said she missed the Energy Committee meeting. At the next meeting we'll continue the building code discussion, since the State has approved upgrading from 2015. There's a grant application for mobile homes to encourage them to apply for energy saving retrofits. At the HDC meeting, there was a demolition review at 87 Front Street. They'll take down the barn, and the subcommittee was fine with that. They also wanted to take down the porch, but we're recommending to keep that. There's also a request for 1 Forrest Street, and we're going out to review it on Wednesday.
  - iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
  - iv. Mr. Chartrand had no report.
  - v. Mr. Papakonstantis had no report, but mentioned that July 15 is the American Independence Museum Festival. The museum is not charging an entrance fee this year.
- e. Correspondence
- i. An NHMA Legislative Bulletin

#### 11. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meetings are 7/24, August 7, August 21, Sept 11, and Sept 25. September 5th is the special defect meeting. Ms. Cowan will not be present on July 24, so the picture was moved to August 7.

#### 12. Non-Public Session

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(a) and (c) . Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0. The meeting entered non-public at 8:07 PM. The Board emerged from non public session. Selectwoman Belanger moved to seal the minutes, Selectwoman Gilman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment. Selectwoman Belanger moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Gilman seconded. The Board stood adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary