

Select Board Meeting
Monday August 7, 2023
6:40 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 6:40 PM.

2. Non Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non public session under RSA 91-A:3 II(a). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

The Board went downstairs to the Wheelwright Room at 6:42 PM.

3. Board Interviews

- a. Michelle Crepeau for the Conservation Commission

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 6:52 PM.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Mr. Papakonstantis recognized the Police Department, Fire Department, Bruce Page, and the volunteers and vendors who participated in National Night Out.
- b. Mr. Papakonstantis mentioned that a resident had an issue with the DPW and his mailbox; the resident wrote a letter to the town to thank Steve Dalton of DPW for a quick resolution.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: July 24, 2023

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of July 24, 2023 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Cowan abstained, as she was not present at the July 24 meeting. The motion passed 4-0-1.

7. Appointments

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Michelle Crepeau to the Conservation Commission as an alternate member, term to expire April 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

8. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Squamscott River Siphons Project Update

Mr. Dean said gave an update on the Squamscott River Siphons project. On July 21, the conductor pipe stopped at 50 feet. The soil deforming the pipe was washed away, but within 10 feet of installation the pipe began to deform again. The contractor came up with a new plan to pull the pipe out of the hole and back out the reamer by pushing from the mill side, which was successful on July 27, but a piece sheared off, causing a loss of connection. 230 feet of siphon pipe was replaced and fused. They attempted the push again Aug 2nd but it was unsuccessful; it got 220 feet from the Swasey Parkway side and hit an obstacle. The current plan to ream the hole again to remove obstacles, first with the 12 inch reamer and then the 18 inch. The pipe will be inserted from the Mill side and pulled toward the Parkway. The Mills have given permission. As of today August 7, they're pipe fusing, which is expected to be complete Wednesday. The reaming process began today. They had a non-toxic fluid release at noontime, and DES was notified. They anticipate that the siphon insertion will take place 8/14.

Mr. Chartrand said because we now have a lump sum contract, these additional permutations are not costing the town additional money.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked about the timeline. Mr. Dean said the pull would be on August 14, and then there is a cleanup process.

b. Quarter 2 Financial Report

Mr. Papakonstantis asked to postpone this item to Aug 21 due to a conflict for the Finance Director.

c. Accept CLG Grant (Pine Street Area Survey)

Ms. Gilman said there's a 10 year plan at the State level to survey towns, including Exeter, and their properties and history. The Heritage Commission applied for a grant to do a historical survey of the Pine Street Area, which has some significant architecture. We proposed to hire a preservation planner to do the survey of the area, which includes Pine Street, Elliot Street, and some of Court Street. We were awarded \$20,000. It has to go to the Governor and Council to be signed. We took all known maps and digitized them to look at the town's development over time. The earliest map is from 1802.

Mr. Chartrand thanked Ms. Gilman for her work on the grant.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to accept \$20,000 in unanticipated revenue from Division of Historical Resources for a historic survey of the Pine Street area and to designate the Town Planner to sign any documents. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Review Select Board Goals from April 2023

Mr. Papakonstantis said although the Board hasn't completely achieved the goals we set, we've made progress. We've worked on the Department Head succession plan, the organizational plan, and the reclassification. We initiated conversation with the Communications Committee. Regarding Capital Projects, we worked on the public safety building and the parking evaluation. We moved to

go forward with several warrant articles that passed in March, such as the roundabout at Pine/Linden, the TIF district, and the Swasey Parkway reconfiguration. There will be another All-Boards meeting in October.

Mr. Dean said regarding the goal of RSA 91-A training, he is facilitating that with NHMA. He should have a date soon and will reach out to all Boards and Committees.

Ms. Gilman said there should be 91-A training as part of onboarding. Mr. Papakonstantis said we've been working on our plan for Committees and setting criteria for onboarding. Chairs are to submit their goals and objectives once a year. Select Board members are to report back on their committees in a standard way. Mr. Dean said there is 91-A information in the onboarding packet, but he needs to take another look. We've proposed bringing new volunteers in for half an hour with the Chair or Department Head.

Ms. Roy said she could create a Google Form which would allow Select Board members to input information on their Committee meetings, then access a read-only format that doesn't allow interaction. That would prevent issues with 91-A.

Mr. Chartrand said one goal was wrapping up the TIF district, but after reading the summary in correspondence, maybe we don't want to wrap up quite yet.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the act of revising or combining some committees may need to go to Town Warrant.

Mr. Dean said regarding Communications Advisory, a town newsletter is on the way. It will be an electronic version. We haven't determined how often, but we were thinking once a month. The Editor in Chief would be the Town Manager's office, with the initial writing done by the Media/Communications Coordinator.

9. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

i. There were no abatements or exemptions considered at this meeting.

b. Permits & Approvals

i. Revision to non-union proposed FY 23 reclassification.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adopt the Exeter non-union proposed FY 23 classification grades as revised. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

ii. Powderkeg Beer and Chili Festival

Parks and Recreation Director Greg Bisson was present to discuss several permitting requests. The first is the annual permit for the Powderkeg Beer and Chili Festival Oct 7. Anything that has to do with alcohol is approved by the Select Board. We're going back to a single session from 1-4 PM, plus a VIP hour with only 500 people. We're keeping the attendance at 3,000. There will be a reusable cup, not a one-time compostable; it will not be glass or plastic. Having a single session will slow people down, as attendees

and vendors felt rushed with two sessions. We'll be using compostable cups and spoons, and we're partnering with Mr. Fox to compost them. There will be a kids area with games. We've already sold 320 tickets.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if the Sewer Siphons article passes, when will they start the work? Ms. Roy said at the end of October/beginning of November, so there shouldn't be a conflict.

Mr. Papakonstantis encouraged residents to volunteer at the festival.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to allow the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department to permit the Powderkeg Beer and Chili Festival on Oct 7 between the hours of 7 AM and 6 PM at Swasey Parkway. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

iii. 32 Court Street Garage

Mr. Bisson said the garage at 32 Court Street has a leak and drywall has fallen off the ceiling. The Department could be there short-term due to relocating to 10 Hampton Road, but the storage is valuable and will be better used after it's repaired. It could also be used by other departments.

Mr. Chartrand asked if that was part of the historic structure, and Mr. Bisson said no, it was built recently by volunteers

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to expend \$6,500 from the Park Improvement Fund to replace the garage roof at 32 Court Street, and award Refined Roofing the contract. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked when the Department will be moving [to 10 Hampton Road]. Mr. Bisson said we're waiting for Public Works to finish. Mr. Dean said we're looking at the construction project [at 10 Hampton Road] and whether we should move the Department sooner or later because of the scope of the construction.

iv. Tennis Courts

Mr. Bisson said the Tennis Courts were last redone 20 years ago. Last year there was damage, and patches from several years ago are starting to peel up and create uneven surfaces. We must either mill it out or repave the whole thing. We're looking to mill out and repave, and do a proper seal coat in-house. We propose to work with MSW paving of Hampton, who have performed this type of project on numerous courts. It would start in September, and the pavement needs to cure for 30 days prior to sealing. Only the lower courts would be closed. Otherwise the town could be held liable for trips and falls. We're hoping to extend the life of the courts 10+ years. We can't wait longer, because it must be 50 degrees or above for the sealer. Programs would be canceled, but three courts would still be open to the general public. He told the pickleballers and they understand. We found a new location for Tennis in the Parks, at Phillips Exeter Academy.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked how to prevent people from reserving courts. Mr. Bisson said there's signage posted that you're not supposed to. The

camera project has been put on hold, as they were to have been installed in-house and that person is no longer available. Mr. Papakonstantis said there should be someone from Parks and Rec frequently monitoring the courts. We may have to consider reserving courts at the High School.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to expend \$10,000 from the Rec Revolving Fund to repair cracks in the tennis courts, and award the contract to MSW Paving. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

v. 10 Hampton Road Renovations

Mr. Bisson said there is a recommendation for the design and engineering of 10 Hampton Road. We had a sitewalk on July 19 with several firms attending, but we only received two proposals. Those who did not respond noted the time constraints from the grant and scheduling. JSA put in a bid of \$58,400. They have over 40 years of experience and won numerous awards. Theirs was a lower number with the same scope. They are experienced in accessibility. This would come from the Park Improvement Fund and Rec Impact Fees.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to allow the Parks and Recreation Department to enter into a contract for \$58,400 with JSA Design to conduct design and engineering for the 10 Hampton Road renovations, and to further authorize the Town Manager or his designee to sign the contract. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Andy Swanson, the IT Coordinator, is retiring in October. Mr. Dean said he was the town's first IT Coordinator and took IT to the next level. He has provided great service to us over the years and he will be missed.
- ii. The Communications newsletter is starting soon. They also talked about a draft Communications Plan they are planning to put forward to the Select Board.
- iii. Budgets are underway. We're looking at a Tree Committee budget. Regarding the Welfare function, going forward we need to think seriously about getting assistance and breaking it into a separate entity. The Police Chief is looking to add a new Officer. We're talking about a Wellness Fund: \$15,000-20,000 for wellness activities, \$5,000 per employee group, for things to support mental health and wellness on the employee's own time. Mr. Papakonstantis said offering resources for mental well-being is vital, but let's look at how we're offering resources and insurance. He's leery of putting a set of funds aside for that. Third party EAP groups offer this if Health Trust doesn't. We need to be equitable.
- iv. Bob Glowacky is the new Media/Communications Coordinator. With Andy's retirement, IT and EXTV will be more separate. Mr. Glowacky will report to Assistant Town Manager Roy. We would be looking to backfill his position in IT.

- v. Consultant Bill Keegan will be back Aug 21st for some interviews on the succession plan.
 - vi. Mr. Dean attended a downtown pedestrian and traffic analysis kickoff meeting. A lot of goals were established.
 - vii. There's a CIP meeting August 10, and Ms. Roy will participate.
 - viii. Regarding Health Trust, the Finance and Personnel committee met last week. The Capital Adequacy Reserve is low, so they're talking about raising rates. We're looking at 14%, where we usually budget 7.5%.
 - ix. National Night Out was a success thanks to Chief Poulin and Bruce Page.
 - x. Regarding the turnaround at Swasey Parkway, we're engaging engineers and getting estimates. We talked about the gate at Water Street and whether it will be ordinary or ornate, but it probably should be ornate. The Board should think about what we want a gate to look like. Mr. Papakonstantis said we should include the Swasey Parkway Trustees.
 - xi. The Town is hosting a Downeaster meeting August 24, site TBD. The Board is invited.
 - xii. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if Health Trust is the only game in town. Mr. Dean said School Choice is the other primary entity offering insurance in NH. Mr. Papakonstantis said he's concerned about whether the Trust has enough options for wellness, as well as about the rate increase. We may want to look at other options. Mr. Dean said the Secretary of State requires that a surplus above \$90M gets turned back to the ratepayers, so we have had reimbursements. We're at \$40M now, so we have some ground to make up. Health Trust offers more options than we take advantage of. We could invite them here to talk about other plans. When communities move over to the other carrier, rates can spike after the first year. Many come back a couple of years later.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports
- i. Ms. Belanger said the downtown study committee will meet every other week. Mr. Chartrand said he'd like to be more involved with that committee. Ms. Belanger said potential stakeholders were added, including the Independence Museum, TEAM, Arts and Culture Commission, Holiday Parade Committee. The committee will put on two public sessions and a survey.
 - ii. Ms. Gilman had a demolition review rear addition at 85-87 Water Street. The Heritage Commission subcommittee found no historic value. The Facilities Committee asked about 32 Court Street, but there hasn't been a conversation yet. Mr. Papakonstantis said Parks and Rec have to move out. Mr. Dean said there is still programming that will happen there. 32 Court Street is a space asset; the Town Offices could shift some of our operations. Mr. Papakonstantis suggested giving the consultant a tour of that space. Ms. Gilman said in the Facilities Committee, we talked about Town Hall and modernizing the facilities.

- iii. Ms. Cowan had a Water/Sewer Advisory meeting, and a member of the public showed up, but there was not a quorum. Mr. Papakonstantis said we should have a conversation with Bob Kelly about reducing member numbers. It would have to go to Town Meeting. Mr. Dean said they could function with 3. In the 2000s there was more interest, so it was expanded to 5, then the Town adopted the 2011 version of 7 members. Mr. Papakonstantis suggested 3 members with 2 alternates. Ms. Cowan suggested hearing the abatements at the Select Board temporarily. Mr. Dean said they could delegate to town staff as well. Mr. Chartrand said the Select Board is the Water/Sewer Commissioners for the town, so we should take it back until we can get the Water/Sewer Commission functioning.
 - iv. Mr. Chartrand participated in National Night Out. He had a meeting with Steve Holmes and Senator Hassan at the Fire Station, and there was a good talk about wellness and mental health.
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Tree Committee talked about a tree donation we're getting. The trees will be ready next month. The committee is working with Dave Short who will house the trees temporarily. We're working with DPW to go get the trees. He also attended the BRC kick-off meeting, where there were new and returning volunteers.
- e. Correspondence
- i. A memo from the Finance Director outlining Budget Instructions
 - ii. The BRC Calendar
 - iii. A memo from Dept of Transportation regarding the total available Block Grant Aid
 - iv. A notice from Kleinfelter about a change of address
 - v. A Jones and Beech permit amendment
 - vi. A memo regarding our bank balance in hand as of July 2023. Mr. Dean said there is \$6.84M in the TIF fund, and the outstanding load is \$2.1M from the original bond. The Carlisle Road extension estimate is \$2.23M, but that's a few years off. The Epping Road improvements, which is a widening project, has a bid in hand at \$1.67M from Severino Construction. We can pay cash for that and not do any borrowing. We'll be taxing again in 2023. There has been additional development in the TIF. Mr. Chartrand asked about any additional projects, and Mr. Dean said there are none as of yet. Mr. Chartrand said we should put future plans in front of the voters. These two projects are a completion of the original plan.
 - vii. A report on our water supply. Mr. Dean said the Water Department tracks water production, and he will plan on including that in the packet going forward. Mr. Papakonstantis asked that this be under Town Manager's report in the future.
 - viii. A recognition from CASA regarding a \$375 donation.

- ix. A memo that SB 110 was approved by the NH Legislature. Ms. Gilman said every town has to provide welfare for people in need. Towns are referring clients to other towns that have more resources. This bill says the receiving towns must be reimbursed.
- x. A letter of thanks from New Generation. Ms. Cowan said this organization does not reflect her values and she's concerned how this donation got through. Mr. Dean said the Human Services Funding Committee works with the Welfare Administrator to make determinations.

10. Review Board Calendar

- a. The Special Town Meeting is August 15th. The next meetings are August 21st, September 11, and September 25. September 5th is the Defect Meeting, when polls must be open for an hour; the Board agreed to have the Deliberative Session starting at 9 AM.

11. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91A 3:11(a). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0. The Board went into non public session at 8:36 PM.

12. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary