

Select Board Meeting  
Monday August 21, 2023  
6:00 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, and Town Manager Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6 PM.

2. Board Interviews

- a. Francoise Elise for the Heritage Commission

3. Non Public Session

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

The Board went downstairs to the Wheelwright Room at 6:10 PM.

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 6:57 PM.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no Proclamations/Recognitions at this time.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: Aug 7, 2023

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of Aug 7, 2023 as presented. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- b. Special Meeting: Aug 17, 2023

Corrections: Mr. Dean said the date of October 21, 2023 is incorrect; it should read August 21, 2023.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of Aug 17, 2023 as amended. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to appoint Francoise Elise to the Heritage Commission as a voting member, term to expire April 2026. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis announced that James Murray will be leaving his position of Health Officer with the town. The Board thanked Mr. Murray, who was present, for his service, especially during the Covid pandemic.

8. Discussion/Action Items

a. Sewer Siphons Update

Mr. Papakonstantis said the vote passed 605 to 58 on August 15. He thanked the voters, the attendees of the Deliberative Session, Interim Public Works Director Paul Vlasich, and Finance Director Corey Stevens for their contributions to this process.

Mr. Dean gave an update on the sewer siphons project. The directionally drilled hole was reamed again August 8. The direction was switched to start at the mills and pull towards the Parkway. The 12" siphon pipe was successfully installed August 15. It passed testing requirements on August 17, and they began demobilization on August 17 and 18. They will be back in December to install the second siphon barrel. The project should finish in Spring 2024.

b. Town of Exeter Policy Against Discrimination

Town Finance Director Corey Stevens said in order to receive our CDS [Congressionally Directed Spending] money for the siphons project, we need a policy against discrimination. He's been working with Town Counsel to define one. We already have an internal policy, but this is for the public and town contractors. It needs to be published on the website and publicly displayed.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adopt the Exeter Policy against Discrimination contained in the Select Board packet. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Financial Update

Mr. Stevens gave a financial update through June 30, 2023. Regarding expenses, non-payroll spending is in line with expectations, but on the payroll side, we are struggling to attract and retain employees, especially in the DPW.

The General Fund had operating revenue of \$10.3M as of June 30, or 48% of budget, vs 44% in 2022. Revenue from property taxes was \$28.6M, of which the town's portion was 24% or \$6.9M. Revenue from services was \$3.4M, with building permits at \$400,000, or 114% of budget. There was a large housing project on High Street for PEA, and the Sylvania site on Portsmouth Ave is being redeveloped.

In Receivables, property taxes were at 87% collected as of June 30, in line with 2022. He added that at the end of last week, they were at 98%.

In General Fund Expenses, we were at \$9.3M spent, or 44%, vs 42% in 2022. General Government was 58% spent, compared to 51% in 2022. There was one claim payout in May 2023, which was reimbursed by Primex. Finance was 47% spent. The FY22 audit is still underway and we haven't paid for it yet. IT was 42% spent due to timing of subscription payments and spending. The

Planning Group was 45% spent. The Electrical Inspector position is still open. Mr. Dean mentioned that we pay a stipend to the Building Inspector to do that work.

Mr. Stevens said the Police Department was \$1.97M spent, or 48% of budget, similar to 2022. Dispatch had one open position, and was at 44% spent. Fire was at \$1.96M, or 46% of budget, similar to 2022. Suppression had open positions at the beginning of the year, but they're now filled. The Health Division was 38% spent; the biggest expense other than wages is mosquito control, which is paid in the late summer. DPW expenditures were \$2.19M or 37% of budget. Key positions were open, including Director, Assistant Engineer, Engineering Tech, and GIS Tech. Snow Removal has a \$313,000 annual budget which was exceeded by \$40,000 due to heavy wet storms with ice. The Plowing budget was over by \$52,000 and the salt budget was over by \$45,000. The Snow and Ice Deficit fund was at \$117,000. General Maintenance was 41% spent, with one open HVAC technician position. The Maintenance Project budget of \$100,000 was 1/3 spent, but there are projects on the horizon. Contracted services, which is the cleaning budget, was 91% spent. We need to look at this budget. We had a Fire Department kitchen remodel and pool house plumbing work done by Building Maintenance. Utilities were 50% spent. The Mechanics Garage has an open position, and was 32% spent, but overtime was 90% spent. Welfare expenses were \$90,000, vs \$37,000 in 2022, or 106% of budget. There was a lot of demand for housing and hotels.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we need to take a look at Welfare during budget season, and Mr. Dean said yes. Ms. Gilman asked him to take a look at work done for non-residents of the town. With the change in law, we can be reimbursed. Mr. Dean said we monitor that closely and try to only serve residents of the town. We try to find housing and we work with other organizations on these issues.

Mr. Stevens said Parks had one labor position open in the first few months and relied on Contract Services, which is 95% spent. They're doing most of their work in spring and summertime. Debt Service was 13% spent; the majority is paid in July.

Mr. Stevens said Water and Sewer also had staffing issues. The Water Fund was \$4.55M spent in 2023, a \$300,000 increase over 2022. On the Revenue side, the Water Fund was \$9.9M collected, in line with 2022. Water Consumption and Water Service charges were bumped up in 2023, but we haven't seen more revenue. In Expenses, Water Administration Wages and Benefits were 45% spent. Water Distribution had two open positions, so Wages and Benefits were 31% spent. In Water Treatment, staff were assisting with water treatment and filtration processes, leading to overtime costs of 138% of budget. The Department of Labor audit led to some building maintenance work. The net income for Water Enterprise fund was in a deficit of \$166,000 due to the timing of capital outlay. The Sewer Enterprise Fund was \$7.4M in 2023, a slight increase over 2022. Operating Revenue was \$3.4M, down \$200,000 from 2022. We suspended our septage program but intend to reinstate it as soon as we can.

We are expecting State Aid Grant Funds for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is about \$1M a year, to be paid in November. Operating Expenses for the Sewer Fund were \$1.36M, or 18% spent. Most of the Sewer Budget is debt service. This year it's a \$4.2M payment, made in December.

Regarding the CATV Revolving Fund, residents voted in favor of flexibility in allocating the Cable Franchise Fee between the General Fund and CATV. This budget will give CATV \$20,000-25,000 at the end of the year for reserves or capital outlay. Currently Cable Access is running a deficit of \$38,000, compared to \$47,000 last year, but we anticipate making a recommendation on reallocating revenue soon. The Rec Revolving Fund had a net income of \$255,000, compared to \$251,000 at mid-year 2022. Revenue from programs was 81% of budget at midyear. Swimming revenue was 121% at midyear, but trailed off after that due to rain. Sponsorship revenue has been robust, an intern was tasked with generating sponsorship revenue in the spring. In EMS, calls for service were up by 150 calls over 2022. Revenue at mid-year was \$360,000, or \$90,000 more than midyear 2022. The EMS expense budget saw a net increase of \$22,000.

Mr. Chartrand asked about filling vacancies. Mr. Dean said we've been working on a nationwide recruitment strategy for some key positions.

d. Chamber of Commerce - Town Hall Lease

Mr. Chartrand recused himself, as he serves on the Chamber Board.

Mr. Dean said he [Mr. Dean] is an honorary non-voting member of Chamber. The Board agreed that as a non-voting member, and not part of the Select Board, Mr. Dean did not need to recuse himself.

Mr. Dean said the Chamber's lease is expiring September 21, 2023. Chamber has sent a letter of intent to renew. They want a 12 month lease rather than a 36 month lease this time. A rent increase of was 3% proposed.

Jen Wheeler, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber is grateful for the partnership with the town and looks forward to continuing that. They would like to engage downtown businesses. They're looking forward to Powderkeg and lighting the town and welcoming Santa Claus in December. They serve 10 communities including Exeter.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the new lease will expire on September 21, 2024.

Ms. Gilman said she appreciates the annual lease because of upcoming discussions about town property usage.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to extend the lease agreement with the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce at a 3% inflation adjustment to expire on September 1, 2024, and further authorize the Town Manager or his designee to sign the lease agreement. Ms. Cowan seconded. Mr. Chartrand had recused himself and did not vote. The motion passed 4-0.

e. Proposed Tree Budget

Mr. Papakonstantis said that the Board will postpone this discussion item until after the Tree Committee's September 12 meeting.

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. Renovations at 10 Hampton Road

Dave Tovey of Parks and Rec said Greg Bisson previously recommended to the Board going with JSA design for Design and Engineering work. At the time of the recommendation, JSA did not have our full project memo. There are some new goals from the Level 2 Energy Assessment. JSA recommends doing some additional work on the electrical and mechanical panels. This would be an additional \$24,400, for a new total of \$82,840. Also, hazardous material identification and removal weren't included in the bid. JSA doesn't do that and recommended a contractor, RPF Environmental. This is to address possible asbestos, lead paint, or mold. This would be \$3,915 from the Rec Revolving Fund.

Ms. Gilman asked if this is time-sensitive. Mr. Tovey said yes; the sooner we have a contract signed, the sooner they can begin and we can put out an RFP for the construction. Ms. Gilman said the Facilities Committee is working on a Facilities Condition Report which covers some of the same materials.

Ms. Belanger said she would like to see the balance in the revolving funds going forward.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to allow Parks and Rec to contract with JSA design to conduct additional design and engineering for electrical, mechanical, and construction administration at \$24,400 for the 10 Hampton Road Renovation, bringing the total design and engineering costs to \$82,840, and further authorize the Town Manager or his designee to sign the contract. Mr. Chartrand seconded. Ms. Gilman abstained. The motion passed 4-0-1.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to allow Parks and Rec to contract with RPF Environmental to conduct a hazardous material identification for the 10 Hampton Road Renovation at \$3,915 and further authorize the Town Manager or his designee to sign the contract. Mr. Chartrand seconded. Ms. Gilman abstained. The motion passed 4-0-1.

Mr. Papakonstantis said that the Exeter Area General Federation of Women's Clubs has asked to post lawn signs along the roadside between November 12 and November 19, and one larger sign at Guinea Road and Hampton Road, for their Yuletide Fair at CMS on November 18. This has been approved in the past; this is the 44th year.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the Exeter Area General Federation of Women's Clubs to distribute 21 inch x 18 inch signs in the Exeter area promoting the Exeter Area General Federation of Women's Clubs Yuletide Fair to be held at Cooperative Middle School on Nov 18,

2023, and to further authorize a larger sign to be placed at the corner of Guinea Road and Hampton Road from Nov 12 - Nov 19 2023. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. There's a Downeaster Station Operation Committee meeting this Thursday at 10:30 AM, with a guided tour of downtown for the delegates from 9:30-10:30.
- ii. Our consultant Bill Keegan met today with representatives of the Labor groups and different departments.
- iii. He attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting at the YMCA last week with Mr. Chartrand.
- iv. There will be a ribbon cutting at Donut Love on Wednesday, and he will be present.
- v. Bob Glowacky put out a biweekly report on the siphons project and the loka.
- vi. The Powderkeg festival is looking for volunteers.
- vii. He met with Health Trust to talk about different offerings for employees. The Blue Choice plan is sunsetting on Dec 31, 2024.
- viii. Comcast is doing work in town and upgrading the lines. We're receiving some calls about that.
- ix. The Right to Know Law seminar planning continues. We have three dates set aside in October.
- x. There will be a CIP meeting Thursday Night, and a Facilities meeting on Wednesday, as well as a Police and Fire workgroup meeting.
- xi. We're looking at spring 2024 for the TIF Road widening project.
- xii. Regarding the roundabout at Pine, Front and Linden, we're anticipating sketches to come in next week.
- xiii. The Kingston Road sidewalk project will go out to bid in fall for construction in spring 2024.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger said there was a Conservation Commission meeting August 8, which she attended via Zoom. There was an application for a wetland conditional use permit for Powdermill Road. They found an additional wetland area, so the driveway was moved and approved. There were also projects on Beech Hill Road and Pine Street. There was a sitewalk, which she did not attend, for a request on Commerce Way to expand parking, which was approved. They also heard about proposed expenditures: a commemorative bench at Raynes was approved, mowing funds were approved, and two potential projects were discussed. At the Housing Advisory Committee meeting, they talked about 79E. There will be a "field trip" to see the Maggie and John Randolph workforce housing project.
- ii. Ms. Gilman said the HDC considered a property at 107 Water Street, and the owners agreed to do the simpler version of proposal. At 87 Water

Street, which is the building with Trends Gifts, the owner will bring the building back to its original look, taking off the awning and uncovering the arched windows, as well as taking the addition off of the back and replacing it with residential units. We're continuing that hearing to hear what materials will be used.

- iii. Mr. Chartrand had no report. He asked if he is the rep to the Facilities Committee. Mr. Papakonstantis said yes. Mr. Chartrand said he will plan to attend the next meeting.
- iv. Ms. Gilman had no report.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis had no report.

e. Correspondence

- i. A letter from Greater Seacoast Community Health
- ii. A general letter from Town Counsel
- iii. A note from the Town Clerk that the RSA requiring a State license for hawkers and peddlers has been repealed. We will revise town ordinance accordingly.

10. Review Board Calendar

The Procedural Defect meeting will be in the Nowak Room on August 29. Town Meeting is 9AM on September 5th. The next Board meetings are September 11 and September 25. On September 27, Mr. Dean will be presenting a draft budget to the BRC.

11. Tax Deed Waivers

Mr. Dean said the Board should read the deed waivers tonight and sign them on September 1st.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 70/132 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 103/8/1 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 64/105/30 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/350 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/116 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/239 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/78 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 87/14/21B because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/5 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/124 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/8 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/228 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 55/44 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/264 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/309 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.



**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/222 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 103/15/11 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/324 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/270 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/15 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/180 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 52/44 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 104/79/217 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 104/79/144 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/37 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/41 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to accept a tax deed on 13/8 unless payment in the amount of \$6,026.74 is received on or before September 4, 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to accept a tax deed on 31/9 unless payment in the amount of \$385.59 is received on or before September 4, 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION (not voted): Ms. Gilman moved to accept a tax deed on 72/20/6 unless payment in the amount of \$6,969.59 is received on or after September 4, 2023. Ms. Gilman withdrew her motion.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to accept a tax deed on 72/20/6 unless payment in the amount of \$6,969.59 is received on or before September 4, 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to accept a tax deed on 87/7 unless payment in the amount of \$492.01 is received on or before September 4, 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to accept a tax deed on 104/68 unless payment in the amount of \$12,700.31 is received on or before September 4, 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved that the Board approve the deed waiver for 95/64/308 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve the deed waiver for 111/5/8 because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

## 12. Non-Public Session

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

## 13. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary

