

Select Board Meeting
Public Hearing for the FY24 Budget
Tuesday January 16, 2024
6:30 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 6:30 PM.

2. Non-Public Session

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

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 6:50 PM.

3. Bid Awards - Septage Equipment, Webster Avenue Pump Station

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Ms. Gilman read the proclamation of National Law Enforcement Day:
Whereas annually January 9th is nationally recognized as National Law Enforcement Day upon its creation in the year 2015;
And Whereas multiple organizations worked in collaboration in the creation of National Law Enforcement Day to promote a positive portrayal of Police Officers among communities and in the news media;
And Whereas the day recognizes, appreciates, and supports the over 900,000 Officers throughout the United States who have chosen the difficult career path of Law Enforcement Officer;
And Whereas Law Enforcement Officers of every rank and file have chosen a profession that puts their life on the line every day for their communities and answering all calls to public service, are often taken away from their families for long hours, and work with local, State, and Federal organizations, making communities safer through commanded dedication;
Now, therefore, the Chair of the Town of Exeter Select Board hereby proclaims and affirms January 9, 2024 as National Law Enforcement Day within the town of Exeter. All people are hereby called upon to promote gratitude, respect, and support for the Law Enforcement Officers who serve and protect our citizens and uphold the law.

Mr. Papakonstantis thanked Police Chief Stephan Poulin, who was present, and his Department for their efforts.

Mr. Papakonstantis recognized Leanne Simpson who served in the Town Clerk's Office for over 20 years and is retiring next week.

6. Approval of Minutes

a. Special Meeting: December 28, 2023

Corrections: Ms. Belanger asked to change "Ms. Belanger asked if the deed *needs to be* filed today or tomorrow" to "Selectwoman Belanger asked if the deed *will be* filed today or tomorrow."

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Special Meeting minutes of December 28, 2023 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Cowan abstained, as she was not present at the December 28 meeting; Mr. Chartrand abstained as he was present at the December 28 meeting but abstained. The motion passed 3-0.

b. Regular Meeting: January 8, 2024

Corrections: Ms. Belanger asked that on Page 6, Select Board Committee reports, *Housing Board* be changed to *Housing Advisory Committee*.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of January 8, 2024 as amended. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments

a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

8. Discussion/Action Items

a. Planet Playground Land Acquisition

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board met in non-public to go over the acquisition of the land associated with Planet Playground at 4 Hampton Road. The Select Board authorized the Town Manager to sign the purchase and sale agreement. The Select Board authorized funds of \$50,000 from ARPA to purchase the property, 100% of the price. It's consistent with how this Board has used ARPA funds, on projects that will be around for decades and that everyone can enjoy.

Mr. Dean said this was a sublease between the town and the nursing home that owned it for many years. This is a significant acquisition at a reasonable price. The town has applied for a Land Water Conservation Fund Grant which would pay for 50% of the price of a new Planet Playground. The total is \$595,000. On the warrant, we are proposing we fund the other part through fund balance. We expect to hear back about the grant in the next two weeks or so.

Ms. Cowan said it's been difficult to make plans for Planet Playground without owning the land, so this is an exciting update.

Mr. Chartrand said Karen Prior and other volunteers first saw the potential of this property. What they did to put the playground together was remarkable.

b. Public Hearing: FY24 Budget and Bonds

Ms. Cowan asked Mr. Papakonstantis to explain why the Board was not able to cancel the meeting tonight because of the weather. Mr. Papakonstantis said the date of the public budget hearing is set by statute. We have a Zoom option for those that are not able to attend in person. The Deliberative Session will be held Saturday Feb 3rd at the High School. Town Election will be at Talbot Gym March 12.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the notice of the budget and bond hearing:
The Exeter Select Board hereby gives notice of a public hearing pursuant to RSA 33:8-a on the following projects requiring bonds and notes as part of the fiscal year 2024 town warrant: Police Station and Fire Substation, \$17,522,500; School Street Area Reconstruction, \$6,510,000; Surface Water Treatment Plant Design/Engineering, \$500,000; Webster Pump Station, Additional Funding, \$884,000; Water Street Reconstruction, \$100,000; and the use of \$213,970.70 in excess bond proceeds to fund two Police cruisers totaling \$120,000 and applying the remaining proceeds (\$93,970.70) to current principal payments on current bond issues. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, January 16 2024 commencing at 7 PM in the Exeter Town Offices, Nowak Room, 10 Front Street, Exeter, NH. The public is encouraged to attend. Posted on January 4, 2024.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to open the public hearing for the town of Exeter 2024 bonds. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 4, Police Station and Fire Substation:
To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventeen million five hundred twenty two thousand and five hundred dollars (\$17,522,500) for the purpose of design, engineering and "net zero" construction of a new police station and fire substation on Continental Drive including equipment, furnishings and related costs, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$17,522,500 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Debt service to be paid from the general fund. (Estimated Tax Impact: assuming 20-year bond at 3.65% interest: .68/1,000, \$68/100,000 of assessed property value). Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. This ballot requires a $\frac{3}{5}$ ballot vote for approval.

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

Mr. Dean said the town proposed an article last year for the same project. It was less expensive last year, which is typical of capital projects. The vote last year was very close; it needed 60% to pass and fell short by 45 votes, in a snowstorm. We brought it back this year for another walkthrough and hopefully an approval. The current Police Station is very small for a town of our size at 6,700 square feet. This project is 15,000-16,000 square feet, which would give them much more room. The current Police/Fire Station was built in 1978 and needs to be replaced. Regarding the Fire Substation, the town has had many studies over the years which all indicated that a Fire and EMS presence on Epping Road makes sense. We're proposing this as the preferred option of many different alternatives that we've been studying over the last few years.

Mr. Papakonstantis said there's a video on the town website that goes through the details of this proposal. The town has grown and the public safety needs of our citizens have grown since 1978.

Mr. Chartrand said he believes this is the right plan for the Public Safety complex and he urges people to vote for it.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Budget Recommendations Committee voted to recommend this project.

Ms. Belanger said this will improve response times to our high school.

Ms. Gilman said that at the time the Public Safety complex was built, there were 9,000 residents, and now there are almost 15,000 residents. We need to give our Officers more room.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 4, Police Station and Fire Substation, in the amount of \$17,522,500. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 5, School Street Area Design/Reconstruction:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six million five hundred ten thousand and zero dollars (\$6,510,000) for the purpose of construction of water, sewer and drainage improvements in the School Street area, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$6,510,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. The Town anticipates receiving 35% debt forgiveness from NHDES to offset a portion of the sewer cost of this project. Debt service will be paid from the general fund, and notwithstanding the general obligation nature of the bonds or notes, it is anticipated that debt service will also be paid from the water fund, and sewer fund. (Estimated Tax Impact: assuming 15-year bond at 3.35% interest:

\$.10/1,000, \$10/100,000 of assessed property value). Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. A ⅔ ballot vote is required for approval.

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

Mr. Dean said this is an area of the town that needs Water/Sewer and drainage improvements. The lines are well past their prime, and in some instances are 40-50 years old or older. A key piece of this project is the 35% debt forgiveness from NHDES for the Sewer portion of the project. The tax impact is \$10/100,000 of assessed value because there is a road/drainage component that comes from the General Fund. This is one of a series of projects such as Westside Drive and Salem Street.

Mr. Papakonstantis said voters have been giving in their votes over the last several years so we can improve our infrastructure a little at a time.

Mr. Chartrand said we should continue to put Water/Sewer and infrastructure improvements on the ballot. It's great for improving property values.

Ms. Belanger said a 2015 management plan put this as a high priority because of the age and small size of the pipes.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 5, School Street Area Design/Reconstruction, in the amount of \$6,510,000. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 6, Webster Avenue Pump Station:
To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thirteen thousand and three hundred dollars (\$213,300) for the purpose of replacement of the Webster Avenue Sewer Pump Station, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$213,300 of bonds or notes, in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Without impairing the general obligation nature of the bonds or notes, it is anticipated that debt service will be paid by the sewer fund. Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. This appropriation is in addition to the \$5,700,000 in bonding authority approved by Article 3 of the 2020 Town Meeting. A ⅔ ballot vote is required for approval.

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

Mr. Dean said this article was requesting \$884,000 when we started. We had a bid opening at the last meeting, and the construction bid price came in lower than anticipated at \$4M. We still do need a little more money to finish this project: \$213,300.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 6, Webster Avenue Pump Station, in the amount of \$213,300. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 7, Surface Water Treatment Plant Design/Engineering:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for the purpose of design and engineering of a new surface water treatment plant, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$500,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other items thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or pass any other vote relative thereto. Without impairing the general obligation nature of the bonds or notes, it is anticipated that debt service will be paid from the water fund. Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. A $\frac{3}{5}$ ballot vote is required for approval.

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

Mr. Dean said this is the initial stages of looking at a surface water treatment plant. The current surface water plant is old, and last had a major upgrade in 1993. We have a new Public Works Director with a water background, so he will be very useful to this process.

Ms. Belanger said the original construction was in 1905. It was updated in 1924, 1972, and 1992. We definitely need to look at options for improvement.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 7, Surface Water Treatment Plant Design/Engineering, in the amount of \$500,000. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Gilman said we've been able to get an excellent interest rate on these bond articles over the past several years.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 8, Excess Construction Proceeds – Police Vehicle Purchase and Principal Payments on Outstanding Bond Issues:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the expenditure of the unused portion of the bonds approved in 2011 for Great Dam Design and Water/Sewer Line Replacement; and in 2012 for Wastewater Treatment Facility Design and Jady Hill Utilities (totaling \$213,970.70) as follows: to raise and appropriate the sum of \$120,000 for the purchase of two Police vehicles per RSA 33:3-a, II. The remaining unused bond proceeds (\$93,970.70) to be applied to the principal payment on the Great Dam Removal bond issued in 2014. The Estimated Tax Impact is none. A $\frac{3}{5}$ ballot vote is required for approval.

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

Mr. Dean said we have three projects listed where we did the project, closed it out, and had a surplus of funds available. The money sits in the town's accounts until something is done with it. This proposes that we use the excess proceeds to buy two Police vehicles which we need and which were part of the original budget submittal by the Department. The other piece is the remaining \$93,970.70 which we'd apply to the principal payment on the Great Dam Removal bond which we are still paying off. This would save money for the taxpayers.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 8, Excess Construction Proceeds for Police Vehicle Purchase in the amount of \$120,000 and Principal Payments on Outstanding Bond Issues, in the amount of \$93,970.70. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to close the public hearing on the Town of Exeter 2024 bonds. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the notice of public hearing:

The Exeter Select Board hereby gives notice of a public hearing on the Town of Exeter Fiscal Year 2024 operating budget and all financial and other warrant articles on Tuesday, January 16th 2024 at 7 PM in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. This hearing will be held pursuant to RSA 32:5 and RSA 40:13. This was dated and posted December 22nd, 2023.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to open the public hearing for the Town of Exeter 2024 Operating Budget. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the first three articles are not discussed this evening: Article 1 is on elected officials and Articles 2 and 3 are zoning amendments. We discussed the bond articles 4-8. Article 9 is to elect town officers.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 10, the Town Operating Budget: Shall the Town of Exeter raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$22,860,862. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$22,572,676, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. A majority vote is required.

Mr. Dean said the estimated tax impact is \$.29/1,000 assessed property value. The town budget represents 23% of the tax bill; the rest is schools and county. He discussed the budget process. This year the health insurance for the town increased 10%. Deliberative session is February 3rd at the High School.

The town vote is March 12 at the Talbot Gym on Linden Street. There are three separate operating budget warrant articles: General Fund, Water Fund, and Sewer Fund. Each operating budget has its own default budget. We've only had one default budget since 2005, and that was actually higher than the proposed operating budget. The CIP financial articles stand alone. The warrant is posted on January 29th, 2024.

Regarding Article 10, the operating budget, the total proposal is \$22,860,862. He showed the recent budget history; in 2019 there was a town revaluation, so the tax rate dropped quite a bit. We have a revaluation scheduled for 2024 and that could change the tax rate.

The largest departments in the General Fund are Police, Fire/EMS, and DPW. These make up 63.8% of the General Fund operating budget. We've tried hard to retain and incentivize our employees. We've had challenges filling positions. Wages had a step adjustment of 3% plus COLA of 2% for eligible non-union employees. Union contracts are settled through this cycle. Health insurance increased 10% for all plans. The Select Board expenses increased \$1,500 to \$5,000. There's a new Town Manager contract funding. The Senior Executive Assistant position is now budgeted 100% in the Town Manager budget, formerly 84%/16% between the Town Manager and Welfare budgets. One of the things we're proposing in this budget is a new part-time Welfare position that will take on those responsibilities. In IT, there's an increase in the phone utilization bill of \$10,200; an increase in the software agreement of \$1,700; and a reduction in network supplies of \$4,000. Media/Communications is a new budget for FY24. The IT/EXTV Technician was reclassified as a Media Communications Coordinator, and Bob Glowacky is in that role. The total budget including expenses is \$65,691. The Town Clerk budget has an increase in health insurance of \$42,363 to account for employee retirements and turnover. There are additional training funds of \$1,000. There are four elections in FY24, so the Elections budget has increased by \$9,238 or 59.5%. The Supervisors of the Checklist and Poll Workers are making very little for what they do, \$10/hr or less. In Finance, there was an increase in audit fees of \$1,410; an increase in GASB reporting requirements of \$5,600; and an increase in the MUNIS software agreement of \$2,154. The Treasurer is a level-funded budget. Tax Collection had an increase in postage of \$1,500. We're proposing an increase of \$1,500 for the lien/deed search. There was a reclassification of the Deputy Tax Collector position to put it more in line with market. There was a reduction in health insurance of \$8,561. The overall budget increase for Tax Collection is 2.9%. In Assessing, our contract assessor services increased \$2,100, our tax map budget increased \$700, and there was an increase in the postage budget for the revaluation of \$3,800. There was also an increase in the revaluation budget of \$9,999 for an independent appraiser per a settlement agreement with Riverwoods.

In Planning, there are wage/benefit increases of \$15,714, or 5.5%. Economic Development has a small decrease in expenses for the single

employee in that department, but an increase in wages/benefits of \$10,534. In Building and Code Enforcement, there is an increase in contract services of \$15,000 for electrical inspections, offset by the elimination of the part-time position of the Electrical Inspector at \$39,139. The overall budget reduction was - 2.4%. If that doesn't work out, we may come back in FY25 to reestablish that position. The Conservation Commission has a small reduction . The Zoning Board is level funded at \$4,376. The Historic District Commission has a budget of \$1,923. The Heritage Commission is at \$1,109. Those are all volunteer Boards.

In the Police budget, part time wages increased \$80,522 for part time Police Prosecutor services. We've reduced contracted services. A full-time employee, Patrick Mulholland, was doing prosecutorial work. When he retired we re-hired him as a part-time Prosecutor. There was also a health insurance increase in that department of 19.2%. There is a Police Equipment purchase increase of \$4,654; a fuel increase of \$1,686; a general expense increase of \$1,500; and a software agreement increase of \$3,904. The overall budget increase is 6.5%.

In Fire, the health insurance increase is 18.2%, due to plan changes. There's a retirement decrease of \$15,147. In Fire expenses, there's a command supplies increase of \$1,396, an IT contract services increase of \$3,753, a dues increase of \$1,396, a fire prevention supplies increase of \$1,157, and a fuel increase of \$1,199. The hydrant maintenance fee being reallocated to the town-wide expenses is a \$20,000 decrease to the Fire budget. The consultant said we should be paying \$700,000 out of the General Fund but we're trying to build up to that over time. The overall Fire budget increase is 3.5%.

In Dispatch, there's a health insurance increase of 63.9% or \$41,018 due to plan changes. The overall Dispatch budget is an increase of 9.5%.

In the Health budget, there's a reduction in health insurance of \$26,185, so the overall budget decrease is -15.8%. There's a single Health Officer, Madison Bailey.

In Public Works, DPW Admin/Engineering has an increase in full-time wages due to reclassifications, the hire of a new DPW Director, and the full year funding of the GIS Technician position, although we haven't been able to fill that yet. The overall budget increase for Admin/Engineering is \$115,015 or 25.1%. In Highways and Streets, the full-time wage increase is \$39,920; the reduction in health insurance is \$49,030; the increase in tree maintenance is \$35,535. There are reductions in asphalt reclamation of \$5,000, culvert repairs/replacement of \$1,000, and fuel of \$3,000. The overall expense increase is \$27,535. The DPW Highway Road paving is reduced from \$700,000 to \$550,000, with the balance to come from Road Aid. The culvert replacement budget has been reduced by \$5,000. The capital outlay budget had an increase of \$50,000 for tree equipment, but the Select Board voted to take that from ARPA funds, so that has come out of the budget. The Snow and Ice budget has an increase of .5% over FY23. The Solid Waste budget has an increase from the disposal/recycling contract of \$73,500. There was a reduction in brush grinding of \$5,000. There was an

increase in landfill monitoring, which has become more complicated in recent years, of \$11,671. Overall the increase is \$84,905 or 6% over FY23. DPW Streetlights and Stormwater are level-funded budgets.

In the DPW Maintenance budget, we've reduced full time wages by \$47,830, as we could not find a HVAC Plumber. There's a reduction in health insurance of \$11,177. There's a reduction of \$3,000 in the fire safety expense budget based on the historical spending. The Town Building accounts had a \$4 increase in electricity, natural gas, building maintenance, and Water/Sewer bills. In the electricity budget, we've had a good contract where we're paying 7.74 cents per KW hour through 2025. In 2025, the new solar array will hopefully be online and we should be selling electricity. The Maintenance Projects budget is level-funded at \$100,000. DPW Garage had an increase in full-time wages of \$8,140 or 5% and an increase in benefits of \$7,250 or 7.1%. The overall DPW Garage budget has increased by \$15,390 or 5.4%.

Welfare/Human Services has an increase in part time wages of \$39,651 for a part time Welfare/Human Services Administrator Position for 9 months of funding at 30 hours per week. We would move that operation out of the Town Manager's office and into a separate position. Human Services agency funding is \$98,325, a reduction of \$285 from FY23.

The Parks and Recreation budget had a Wage and Benefits increase of \$45,856 or 11.7% over FY23 due to reclassifications. The Parks budget had an increase in contracted services of \$11,340, which would allow them to mow more frequently and do more maintenance in the town. There's an increase in full time wages of \$6,717 and a benefits increase of \$11,340. The total Parks budget had an increase of \$28,467 or 12.8%.

Other Culture/Recreation had an increase in Veterans Activities of \$500 for addition Memorial Day Parade expenses. The total budget is \$34,500.

The Library increase is \$13,369 or 1.1%. Their total budget is \$1,185,689.

The General Fund debt service had an increase of \$571,684, or 38.2%. This includes the Solar Array project, which will have its own revolving fund; we anticipate funding from the Federal Government to reimburse the General Fund for that project. It also includes Intersection Improvements, including the roundabout at Pine/Front/Linden. The Westside Drive Design and Construction is \$6M. The Epping Road water tank, a project from 2009; and the Lincoln Street project phase 1 and 2. In General Government, there's an increase of \$100,000 paid to the Water Fund for fire suppression. The General Fund Vehicle Replacement and Leases is \$248,495, a reduction of \$19,771 from FY23 because some of our lease purchases have been paid down. The total FY24 General Budget is \$22,860,862.

Mr. Papakonstantis said retention and recruiting of employees is not a problem exclusive to Exeter or NH, it's widespread. A wage reclassification has not been done in Exeter since 2014. The Select Board approved funds to have a third-party consultant come in to compare our wages to other towns. The cost to recruit and replace is far greater than fairly reclassifying wages for long-time

employees. There's only one position proposed in this budget, which is part time. It would be bringing back a part-time position that we had around seven years ago which was taken on by the Executive Assistant to the Town Manager because it did not interfere with their regular duties, but times have changed. During the pandemic and post-pandemic, we've been tracking the time spent by this employee on Human Services vs the Executive Assistant duties, and the hours dictate that we consider bringing back that position.

Mr. Dean said the total revenue applicable to this budget is \$8,872,315, so the total taxes estimated to be raised in FY24 is \$13,988,547. The FY23 taxes raised were \$13,229,888. Regarding Article 10, the current rate is \$6.73 per thousand, but that assumes a 1% increase in net taxable valuation. The latest median assessment ratio is 64%, so the rate could drop close to \$2 per thousand. By law the ratio has to be 90-110%.

Mr. Chartrand asked how much of the budget increase is related to employee retention and filling empty positions. Mr. Dean said \$630,000 of the increase, or 40%. Mr. Chartrand said the Budget Recommendation Committee usually tries to keep the budget increase at 3-4% but the Board made a conscious decision that retaining and finding new employees was more important than hitting that historical marker. The increase is 7.2%. Ms. Gilman said every town in the State is having trouble retaining employees. We don't pay as much in salary as the States around us. Ms. Cowan said our community sees the impact when we don't have fully staffed Departments, such as the DPW. Ms. Belanger said you have to factor in the cost of new hires and training. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Select Board is dedicated to setting up succession planning. The core functions of this town come down to our employees and our volunteers.

Ms. Belanger asked if the fence for 23 Water Street should be added to the budget. Mr. Dean said the Recreation Department has a revolving fund that could accommodate the fencing at 23 Water Street.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 10, the 2024 Operating Budget, to the voters. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 11, the Water Fund Budget:
Shall the Town of Exeter raise and appropriate as a water operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$4,962,773. Should this article be defeated, the water default budget shall be \$4,828,764, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law. Majority vote required.

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

Mr. Dean said this is an Enterprise Fund which covers all of our Water expenses, from Operations to Maintenance to Capital Equipment and Debt Service. Mr. Chartrand said it's a very small increase.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 11, the 2024 Water Fund Budget, to the voters. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 12, the Sewer Fund Budget:

Shall the Town of Exeter raise and appropriate as a sewer operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$7,490,430. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$7,569,284, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law.

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

Mr. Dean said the lion's share of this budget is the debt service, including the Wastewater Treatment Facility debt service at \$3.6M. This also represents all of our operations and maintenance of our wastewater facility, our collection systems, our pump stations, and our siphons. We are contemplating hiring a sixth operator for the Wastewater Facility, which was recommended by NH DES. This is an enterprise fund paid for by the Sewer bills.

Mr. Chartrand pointed out that the default budget is larger than the operating budget.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 12, the 2024 Sewer Fund Budget, to the voters. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 13, Planet Playground:

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, through special warrant article, the sum of five hundred ninety-five thousand dollars (\$595,000), for the purpose of purchase and installation of a new Planet Playground including equipment, at the Town Recreation Park at 4 Hampton Road. Approximately \$297,500 of this appropriation will be funded by a Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. (Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation). The Select Board has designated this a special warrant article. Majority vote is required.

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

Mr. Dean said this is a special warrant article, which can be encumbered by Board vote for an additional 12 months without further action. Mr. Papakonstantis said it would be exciting if we could get this grant. He would like to put together a committee to get community feedback when the time comes.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 13, Planet Playground, at a cost of \$595,000, to the voters. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 14, Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan – Water Street Stormwater. He asked that “Board of Selectmen” be changed to “Exeter Select Board.”

To see if the Town will authorize the Exeter Select Board to enter into a loan agreement of no more than \$100,000 through the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund for the purpose of developing a replacement plan for Water Street stormwater infrastructure. The loan will provide up to \$100,000 principal forgiveness; therefore, no repayment of the loan will be required. A 3/5 vote is required.

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

Mr. Dean said we've been doing a lot of stormwater improvements around town. This is an opportunity to get \$100,000 from the State Revolving Fund at no cost.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 14, Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan – Water Street Stormwater, at a price of \$100,000. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 15, Appropriate to Sick Leave Trust Fund:
To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Sick Leave Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. (Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation). Majority vote required.

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

Mr. Dean said we ask for this to be funded every year. When people retire from the town after 20 years of service, we have a 50% sick leave buyback. It comes from unassigned fund balance, so there is no tax impact.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 15, Appropriate to Sick Leave Trust Fund at \$100,000, to the voters. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 15, Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – Parks Improvements:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) to be added to the Parks Improvement Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Estimated Tax Impact: .03/1,000 assessed property value, \$3.34/100,000 assessed property value). Majority vote is required.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the fund has previously been funded at \$100,000. The initial request in this budget was \$50,000. The BRC had a thorough discussion about putting it back to the \$100,000. This is used to make improvements to our parks. It is spent annually. \$75,000 was a compromise.

He asked for public comment, but there was none.

Parks and Recreation Director Greg Bisson, who was present via Zoom, said the Parks Improvement Fund has made a big impact on the Parks Department. Fully funding it would be outstanding. He has sent in a list of potential projects. Mr. Dean said we developed the budget with \$50,000 in mind. \$75,000 is more than that. There are some projects and we did just acquire a park downtown. He's more comfortable with \$75,000 than \$100,000 but he can see it either way.

Mr. Chartrand suggested respecting the \$75,000 that the BRC recommended but making a firm commitment to restoring it next year. This is a temporary reduction in recognition of the employee retention efforts we're making.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked what the tax impact of the full \$100,000 would be, and Mr. Dean said .4/1,000.

MOTION [not voted]: Mr. Chartrand made a motion to accept the \$75,000 Parks Improvement Fund budget that the Budget Recommendations Committee put forward, but with the understanding that this Board would like to restore that to \$100,000 next year. Ms. Belanger seconded. She asked that it be noted that the BRC did not have 23 Water Street on their radar when they made that vote. Mr. Papakonstantis said he can't vote for this; the tax impact is not great and there is work that needs to be done. Ms. Gilman said she's wary of binding a future Board to an action, it's not allowed.

Mr. Chartrand withdrew his motion and Ms. Belanger withdrew her second.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand made a motion to accept the \$75,000 Parks Improvement Fund budget that the Budget Recommendations Committee put forward, but it is the sense of this Board that next year we would like to see that restored to \$100,000. Ms. Belanger seconded. Mr. Papakonstantis voted nay and the motion passed 4-1.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 17, Appropriate to Non-Capital Reserve Fund – Snow and Ice Deficit:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty-thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Snow and Ice Deficit Non-Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. (Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation). Majority vote is required.

Mr. Dean said this is a customary article. Because our snow and ice season straddles two fiscal years, there are years where we run over budget. We tap into the fund when we have years of snow and ice that exceed the budget.

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

MOTION: Ms. Belanger made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 17, Appropriate to Non-Capital Reserve Fund – Snow and Ice Deficit in the amount of \$50,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 18 – Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – ADA Fund:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the ADA Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Estimated Tax Impact: .02/1,000 assessed property value, 2.21\$/100,000 assessed property value). Majority vote required.

Mr. Dean said this article is to fund ADA-related projects that keep us in compliance. This year we have utilized the fund to add a changing table to the public restroom downtown. Ms. Belanger said we should look at increasing this in the future. There are some big projects we will want to consider.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 18, Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – ADA Fund in the amount of \$50,000. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 19, Appropriate to Trust Fund – Swasey Parkway:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,500) to be added to the Swasey Parkway Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. This amount is equivalent to the amount of permit fees collected during 2023 for use of the Swasey Parkway. (Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation). Majority vote required.

Mr. Dean said this is an expendable trust fund which is why it appears on the warrant. We raise certain amounts of money for use through fees, and we return those fees to this fund to be used for Parkway purposes. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if there is also a line item in the budget for Swasey Park, and Mr. Dean said yes, for maintenance and electricity.

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

MOTION: Ms. Belanger made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 19, Appropriate to Trust Fund – Swasey Parkway in the amount of \$3,500. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 20 – Adopt Investment Services for Capital Reserve Funds:

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to RSA 35:9-a-II, to authorize the Trustees of Trust Funds to pay for capital reserve fund investment services, and any other expenses incurred, from capital reserve funds income. Such authority shall remain in effect until rescinded by vote of the Town. No vote to rescind the authority shall occur within 5 years of the original adoption of this article. (Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation). Majority vote is required.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Trustees of the Trust Funds have been working diligently over the last year to look at improving our money management.

They vetted several organizations in public meetings and came to the Select Board with a recommendation. They have also gone to the various SAU 16 School Boards, which have endorsed this. He's excited to see how we can build on our investments.

Pat Curtis of the Trustees of the Trust Funds said we're looking to beat inflation. We want to use conservative investment strategies. We did thorough vetting to select Three Bearings as the investment advisor. We hope to raise more money than what we've done over the past decade. Mr. Papakonstantis said this will also be on the school ballots; this article is only for the percentage of town investment.

Mr. Chartrand said he is very much in support and appreciates the work that the three Trustees have done. To beat inflation is low-hanging fruit and not risky. It's long overdue.

Mr. Dean said regarding "No vote to rescind the authority shall occur within five years of the original adoption of this article," that's actually in the RSA. The town commits to the five-year window. Ms. Belanger said she doesn't think that's clear in the wording. Mr. Dean said this language was worked on very hard by the Trustees. Mr. Curtis said there will be an explanatory page. The five years is the authority to hire an investment advisor, but we have the authority to change investment advisors within that five years.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 20 – Adopt Investment Services for Capital Reserve Funds. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 21 – Establish Town Solar Array Revolving Fund:

To see if the town will vote to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a solar array on the Cross Road Town Landfill. All revenues received for array operations from net metering credits, federal grants and aid, and REC (renewable energy credit) sales will be deposited into the fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund balance. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the governing body and town manager, and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Such funds may be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created. Majority vote is required.

Mr. Dean said this would set up a separate fund to account for revenues and expenses for the solar array. It's an easier way to track revenues for that and will make it easier to report out how the solar array is doing.

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

MOTION: Ms. Belanger made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 21 –Establish Town Solar Array Revolving Fund. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the next two warrant articles come out of work the Select Board has been doing looking at the committees and boards to ensure that they have a quorum. We felt that we needed to revise the makeup of the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee and Heritage Commission, but both of these were established at Town Meeting, so we have to ask the voters to allow us to revise the committees appropriately.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 22 – Water/Sewer Advisory Committee: *To see if the Town will amend Article 20 of the 2011 Town Meeting by reducing the number of members of the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee from seven (7) members to five (5) members. Of the five members, two (2) members shall be members of the Select Board. Members of the Select Board shall be voting members of the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee. Majority vote is required.*

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

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 22, to amend Article 20 of the 2011 Town Meeting regarding the makeup of the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 23, Heritage Commission: *To see if the Town will vote to reduce the number of members of the Heritage Commission from seven (7) members to five (5) members. The composition of the Heritage Commission will include one (1) Select Board representative, one (1) Planning Board representative, one (1) Historic District Commission representative, and two (2) at-large members appointed by the Select Board. The Heritage Commission will include three (3) alternate members. Majority vote is required.*

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

Mr. Dean said he suggests adding “appointed by the Select Board” after *three alternate members.*

Ms. Gilman said we need this. She hasn’t been able to bring this to the Heritage Commission because it hasn’t had a quorum.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger made a motion to recommend to the voters Article 23 as amended. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 24 – Citizen’s Petition – ‘Rugg Property’: *By petition, to see if the voters in the Town of Exeter support the future purchase of approximately 47 acres of property owned by the Rugg family located north of Oaklands Town Forest and east of Wood Ridge Lane by the Town of Exeter for the purposes of expanding the town-owned Oaklands Town Forest, and preserving open space, trails, public outdoor recreation, drinking water supplies, and wildlife habitat; to request that the Selectmen review the project, including evaluation of potential funding options such as bonds; and to advise and authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, accept, and pass through any federal or state grants, loans, or private gifts, if any, which may be available for*

said acquisition, in collaboration with and facilitated by conservation organizations.

Mr. Papakonstantis said we can't amend the wording of citizen's petitions, but he would like any future petitioners to be reminded that it's the Select Board rather than the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment.

Toby Ferdon of 10 Stone Ridge Lane said he would like the Board's support for acquisition of this land. He abuts this property and the draw of the open space and the trail network is what brought him to this area. As we move forward, the more support we get from the community and the Board, the more apt we are to get grants toward the purchase of this land.

Sean Torres of 18 Phinney Lane said he moved here in 2013 one of the things that drew him here was how more cohesive Exeter is than other towns. A big part of that is the parks and open spaces. The trails are an inclusive spot and he supports this.

Tom Bergeron of Washington Street said the property network is one of the draws Exeter has. There's nothing else like it. Kids snowshoe out there, cross-country ski, and hike. We should keep it in the community.

John Elliot of 6 Tamarind Lane said he uses this land a lot and thinks there's an opportunity to expand the natural resource and public access.

Mr. Chartrand asked why there is not a spot for the Select Board to recommend this article. Mr. Papakonstantis said that the Select Board is not obligated to vote to support a citizen's petition unless there is an amount to raise and appropriate. The Board fully supports the plan. We need to do our due diligence as a town.

Mr. Chartrand said putting forward an advisory citizen's petition to take the temperature of the town is a great strategy. It will be important to see how the town votes on this.

Vanessa Lazar of 35 Woodridge Lane said as far as due diligence, we've been patient, and we were told the middle of January the report would be done. When can we expect that? Mr. Dean said he can't put an exact date on it but he had a conversation today on this issue for a progress report, and it seemed very close to coming to a space where recommendations can be made. It may be two weeks out. This is a complex title issue, and working through it has been a real challenge.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 25 – Citizen's Petition – Swasey Parkway *On petition of Donald Clement and others to see if the Town will vote to make the Swasey Parkway a one-way road northbound in its entirety for motorized vehicular traffic and raise and appropriate the sum of \$2500 to construct speed bumps and maintain the road.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if there was anyone present to speak to the petition, but there was not. He asked for public comment.

Vanessa Lazar said it's her understanding that if no motor vehicles are allowed, the Parkway can't have a food truck event or any vendors. Mr.

Papakonstantis said there was a warrant article two years ago based upon public comment, letters, phone calls, and emails, both supporting and not supporting the road closure. At that time, Selectwoman Cowan made a motion to create a warrant article that was a compromise: to discontinue the road from the Water Street entrance to the gazebo. From the gazebo to Newfields Road would be open. The warrant article was presented to the voters who voted in support of it. It went to Rockingham Probate Court and before a judge who reviewed the testimony and issued an order to discontinue the road. Last year, there was a citizen's petition that wanted to reverse the warrant article and put it back to a one-way road, which passed by the voters. Legal counsel reviewed it and determined that it was not binding, because there was no road to reopen based upon the wording of that citizens petition. This citizen's petition is asking for money to add speedbumps and maintain the road. Then we had the siphon project, which has consumed the Select Board for about a year, with a special town meeting and deliberative session, so the road has been closed to all traffic. Once the siphon project is over, per the judge's order, the road will remain discontinued from Water Street to the gazebo. If a special event such as the Farmer's Market is permitted, then those vendor trucks can use the roadway.

Mr. Chartrand said he's been impressed by the way this Board is trying to find compromise on this issue. A citizen's petition passed two years ago which allowed the Select Board to seek compromise, with access for pedestrians and cyclists but also vehicles. The Board has had joint meetings with the Swasey Parkway Trustees. He's not in favor of this article because it will restrict the ability to find that compromise. He's asking the voters not to vote for it. The Board will find a way to accommodate all. He appreciates that Mr. Clement and the citizens who signed this put it forward, but in the spirit of compromise that the Select Board works towards, he asks that the voters turn this down.

Ms. Belanger said the warrant article two years ago passed. Then we had a citizen's petition which passed. The lawyer said we couldn't do anything with it because the petition said to keep the road open but it had already legally been closed. It's up to the voters to try one more time.

Ms. Gilman asked whether it's even a road anymore. Mr. Papakonstantis said no, it's been discontinued. Mr. Dean said it would be up to the Select Board to lay that road out again, and it would require a petition to the court. Mr. Papakonstantis said he would like to hear from Town Counsel at Deliberative Session what would happen if this passes. The petition last year was found to be non-binding.

Ms. Cowan said that when she made the motion two years ago, she initially wanted to close the whole road, but she heard the accessibility concerns. Ambrose Swasey dedicated this to pleasure vehicles and she doesn't think that means cars as we know them now, she thinks the intention was recreation. We've done a good job with this compromise and people will see that when we can move forward. People have the right to petition anything, but she wants to move on.

Ms. Belanger said if it weren't for the siphon, we would be there by now.

Mr. Chartrand said he doesn't know if we've found the right solution yet that balances automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he never thought about closing the road until it was temporarily closed during the pandemic and it was packed with people enjoying it. Then we started hearing that some people couldn't enjoy it because of mobility issues. The motion that Selectwoman Cowan made was a great compromise. The Swasey Park Trustees are three incredibly talented and dedicated officials who care about the Parkway very much. He appreciates the collaboration between the Trustees and the Board. The majority of people in town want to find a compromise. He would like to see a committee formed to determine how we can make this inclusive for everybody. The petitioners have their right and this is something that will be decided by the voters, but he won't recommend this as written.

Mr. Papakonstantis said we have to make a recommendation on this because of the "raise and appropriate."

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to recommend Article 25, Citizens Petition from Donald Clement and others, to see if the town will make Swasey Parkway a one-way road northbound and to also raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500. Ms. Belanger seconded. All voted nay and the motion failed 0-5.

Mr. Papakonstantis said Article 26 is to transact any other business that may come before Town Meeting.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to close the Town of Exeter 2024 operating budget public hearing. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

9. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 70/57 in the amount of \$17,500 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 85/61 in the amount of \$14,000 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a solar exemption for 95/1 in the amount of \$12,000 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve veteran's credits in the amount of \$500 for tax year 2024 for the following properties: 69/3/6, 80/7/4, 68/6/544, 86/17, 87/26, 71/10/4, 63/44, and 64/97. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to deny a veteran's credit for 68/6/241 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a veteran's credit for 70/4 in the amount of \$2,000 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

There were no permits or approvals considered at this meeting.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. The DPW did an excellent job with the recent flooding.
- ii. Fire responded to several mutual aid fires and did an excellent job. All of our firefighters are safe.
- iii. The Kingston Road project is supposed to be substantially complete by July and complete by August of this year.
- iv. The changing table has been installed at Town Hall, it's just waiting on electricity to be wired in.
- v. We've been working with Ironwood Design on some concepts for Swasey Parkway that are different from the turnaround that was put forward.
- vi. The Court Street Sewer Pump replacement is underway.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger attended her meetings via Zoom. At the Conservation Commission meeting, the group authorized the Chair to sign a "Connect to Protect" petition. The Trust for Public Land requested a letter of support for the Newfields grant for the Rugg property. Newfields is further along in the process and their costs are potentially higher. The group authorized the Chair to send a letter of support. Regarding Raynes Barn, they signed a one-year contract extension with the contractor who's been working on it. A hometown grant is available for help with funding for the barn. There will be a full moon snowshoe event, date to be announced on their Facebook page. The "Heard Bird" contest is ongoing. The feasibility study for Pickpocket Dam will be reviewed at Town Hall on February 27th. The Linden Street Bridge work permit has been received, and the staging area will be in the McDonnell Conservation property. At the Planning Board meeting, they had the first public hearing on the zoning amendments. The discussion was on ADUs and conversions, and trying to make the rules more concise as well as other changes. The other amendment would expand the MUND area.
- ii. Ms. Gilman said that the Energy Committee met and talked about the window fitters project. There will be a workshop going on for a week in Conway or Lebanon. The building would happen in the fall. CPCNH Regulatory and Legislative Advisory Committee had some success this week but there were threats to the net metering issue.
- iii. Mr. Chartrand said he would like to defer his report given the hour.
- iv. Ms. Cowan had no report.

v. Mr. Papakonstantis said he met with the Tree Committee and they're excited about their proposed budget. They're going to work with Bob Glowacky and Kristin Murphy on a tree survey.

e. Correspondence

i. An email from Jen Martell regarding Swasey Park.

10. Review Board Calendar

a. The next meetings are January 29, February 12, February 26, and March 18. Deliberative Session is February 3, Town Election is March 12, and next Tuesday is the Presidential Primary.

11. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(c). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0. The meeting entered non-public session at 9:50 PM.

12. Adjournment. The Board emerged from non public session. Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes indefinitely, seconded by Ms. Belanger. Motion carried 5-0. Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn, second by Mr. Chartrand. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary