

Select Board Meeting

Monday July 14, 2025

7 PM

Nowak Room, Town Offices

Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Nancy Belanger, Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM.

2. Bid Award - Westside Drive

Public Works Director Steve Cronin said they have a recommendation for bid award for the Westside Drive project. They met with the low bidder, N Granese and Sons, to discuss the project schedule and sequence of work. Some changes were made to the scope of work to bring it into line with the funding. NH DES is reviewing the bids as well, so we're asking the Board to award the contract contingent on their authorization.

Mr. Chartrand said he's pleased that they were able to reduce the scope of work to meet the voters' amount without significantly reducing it. Mr. Cronin said we were able to plan it in one construction season, which will reduce costs like the Police detail and temporary paving.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to award a contract to N Granese and Sons Inc for the Westside Drive drainage, water, and roadway improvements project in the amount of \$5,456,008.90, contingent upon receipt of authorization to award from NH DES, and to further authorize the Town Manager or their designee to sign the associated contract documents. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

3. Public Comment

a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

a. There were no proclamations/recognitions at this meeting.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: June 30, 2025

Corrections: Ms. Belanger asked for clarification of line 444 where it read [stet], and was told this means "as it stands" which indicates that the information was transcribed accurately even though it differed from the packet. Ms. Belanger decided not to remove it from the minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger made a motion to approve the Select Board minutes of June 30, 2025 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Appointments and Resignations

45 a. Mark Lemos from the Energy Committee
46 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept with regret the resignation of Mark Lemos from the
47 Energy Committee. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
48

49 7. Discussion/Action Items

50 a. CPCNH rates

51 Cliff Sinnott and Nick Devonshire of the Energy Committee were present
52 to give a presentation on the CPCNH Rates. Mr. Sinnott said there has been a
53 significant increase to the rates. CPCNH [Community Power Coalition of New
54 Hampshire] is a nonprofit community aggregator that gives us buying power.
55 They're our default energy supplier. We've been part of this group for two years.
56 The rate resets every six months; it runs from August 1 to January 31, then
57 February 1 to July 31. CPCNH announced the new rate on July 2nd. It will go
58 from 9.7 cents per KWH to 13.73, a 30% increase. This is happening to all the
59 utilities in the State; Unitil is going up by 41.8%. There has been a large increase
60 in Natural Gas prices, which is the governing price setter for electric rates.
61 CPCNH is also trying to restore its reserves.

62 Mr. Devonshire said natural gas is up 60% over the last six months. For
63 the second time, we're not beating the default supply rate, but we're replenishing
64 our reserves. We had a bad cold snap last winter that used them up. We have
65 still delivered significant savings over the default rate during the last few years for
66 Exeter's 6,400 customers.

67 Mr. Chartrand asked about the schedule to build those reserves. Mr.
68 Devonshire said the replenishment options were 3, 4, or 5 years; we set the rate
69 at 3 years. Running down the reserves puts us in a precarious position.

70 Mr. Sinnott said the "Granite Basic" plan is 9.7 cents per KWH, and there
71 are higher levels of renewable energy. Unitil is 8.3 cents currently and will go up
72 to 11.77 cents August 1. Since the program started, there have been six rate
73 periods. Initially the Unitil rates were very high due to the invasion of Ukraine. For
74 four of these six periods, CPCNH has been better than the default utility rate. Mr.
75 Devonshire said we estimate an overall savings of \$2,311,566 to ratepayers in
76 Exeter if the average usage continues through Jan 2026.

77 Mr. Sinnott said for the average rate payer, the bill will go up \$9-13. Any
78 rate payer is free to leave CPCNH for another third-party supplier. CPCNH
79 doesn't have profit or return on investment they're required to make. Switching
80 away to a third party can take 1-2 billing periods. Customers should be careful
81 about cancellation policies of third-party suppliers. He added that there's more
82 information on the Energy Committee's website.

83 Mr. Chartrand said he will be staying with CPCNH for his home and
84 business because it's the better option long-term.
85

86 b. Planet Playground Update –

87 Parks & Recreation Director Greg Bisson was present to give an update.
88 Mr. Bisson said the renovation of Planet Playground is 99% complete. With 300

89 kids in camp, it's hard to finish the landscaping. The playground has become a
90 viral sensation. We had a soft opening on Memorial Day weekend, and our social
91 media post was viewed by 104,000 people; 1,100 of them engaged and we
92 gained 140 new followers. 89% of the post's viewers did not follow Exeter Parks
93 and Rec. There will be a ribbon cutting on August 1 at 2 PM. He received an
94 email from a town resident whose daughter is in a wheelchair, and it's the first
95 time the child has been able to get around the entire park. 57 bricks have been
96 sold; there's an October 1st deadline.

97 Ms. Belanger said about the designated parking area for tournaments.
98 Mr. Bisson said it worked well at a recent pickleball tournament.

99 Mr. Bisson said we worked with the Tree Committee and replaced all four
100 of the trees we cut down. Dave Short donated two of them.

101
102 c. 1st Reading - Ordinance 802.3(j) & 802.4(c-6) – Update NH RSA

103 Ms. Roy said in 2023, one RSA was repealed and replaced. This is just
104 going through and referencing the correct RSA; there are no other changes. Mr.
105 Papakonstantis said the second reading and vote will be July 28.

106 Mr. Papakonstantis read the changes to Ordinance 802.3(j), and 802.4(c-
107 6). This is an amendment to Chapter 8 of the Town of Exeter Ordinances, the
108 ordinance to regulate vendors, hawkers, peddlers, solicitors, and other itinerant
109 vendors and door-to-door solicitation and canvassing. The change to 802.3(j) is
110 to change NH RSA 321:19 to NH RSA 31:102-a, and the change to 802.4(c-6) is
111 to change NH RSA 321:19 to NH RSA 31:102-b.

112
113 d. Legislative Update

114 Representative Julie Gilman said there were major cuts in the State
115 budget. The Council on the Arts has been disbanded and now relies on
116 donations from businesses. After January 1, you don't have to get your car
117 inspected, but residents should check their insurance for liabilities. The Council
118 of Aging was cut to one person, but they added an advisory council. It allows
119 video slot machines in any charitable gaming establishment; that's where they're
120 counting on a lot of the revenue for the budget. The Renewable Energy Fund
121 was raided. Public Safety personnel have been cut, and the Department of
122 Health and Human Services has been given more responsibilities. Because of
123 cuts to the Council of Aging and the Arts Council, we won't be able to get
124 matching grant funds from those entities.

125 Ms. Gilman said regarding zoning, HB 577, the ADU expansion bill,
126 allows one detached or attached accessory dwelling unit by right. She added that
127 Exeter already allows this. There are concerns about the impact on the
128 water/sewer infrastructure with doubling the number of units in a zoning district.
129 Regarding parking space requirements, residential housing units will only need
130 one parking space total.

131 Ms. Gilman said regarding voting, the Supervisors of the Checklist will
132 have to purge voter rolls annually, instead of every 10 years. This will mean that

they're working many more hours every year. Mr. Chartrand asked about the criteria for removal. Ms. Cowan said they're looking at whether you voted in the last Presidential election. Mr. Chartrand asked if it's harder to re-register now. Ms. Gilman said they're now allowing you to vote without re-registering if your ID has the same information, but if it has changed you have to go through the whole process.

Ms. Gilman said the Governor vetoed several bills: the cellphone ban in schools; enabling school districts to adopt partisan school elections; and kindergarten transportation. She signed bills about school vouchers having no limits for income, the number of kids, or where they go. The religious aspect is still there, even though it's unconstitutional. If you have a student in Exeter that would rather go to Pinkerton Academy, Exeter has to pay for that student's tuition to the new school. They added required curriculum to graduate for public school students. Now require that a public body's minutes include the start and end time of the meeting. They're doubling a lot of fees, such as car registration or business licensing. There's now going to be a tax on income for people who rely on Medicaid and added a work requirement for able-bodied adults: 100 hours of work or an approved volunteer position, which is 20 more hours than the Federal government just set.

Ms. Belanger asked if Ms. Gilman's notes could be added to the packet.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to rescind an abatement from June 30, 2025 for 110/2/105 in the amount of \$133.38. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 110/2/105 in the amount of \$114.87 for tax year 2023. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Interest Waiver Request

Mr. Papakonstantis said an individual used a checking account that was no longer active and incurred a fee of \$30. The request is to waive the \$30 fee.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to waive the \$30 fee assessed for insufficient funds for account number 2128164-0. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report - Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy

- i. Many staff and residents are on vacation in July.
- ii. We're working with the Finance office on the CIP and budget process. We'll meet with DPW tomorrow to review their CIP requests.
- iii. We met with Kathy in Planning on their deadlines for the CIP
- iv. We're working with the Building and Planning Dept for coverage options while the Planning Director is on leave for a few months.
- v. We're working with the DPW and Legal for the groundwater easement language. This will come to the Board for approval.

- vi. We met with Steve Jones from Pairpoint Park to discuss fundraising and CIP.
- vii. We worked with the union and an employee on a workers' comp issue.
- viii. The Town manager worked with Ms. Gilman to write letters to the State
- ix. We're moving forward on the Police Station/Fire substation. We're hoping to have an update at the next Select Board meeting.
- x. 10 Hampton Road is on schedule to finish by the end of August.
- xi. The weekly Ops meetings have been changed from Friday AM to Wednesday AM. They've been a great way to keep everyone involved.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Gilman attended an Energy Committee meeting. In addition to a discussion of CPCNH, we discussed events; we may do another round of "window dressers." We're looking to have another nonprofit do the labor. We're looking for people to apply for the "Jack Frost Fund" grant for manufactured housing through the Natural Resources Planner. There was a door hanger about the program, but some people thought it was a scam. The grant money has to be spent by the end of the year. She met with the 250th Committee, which has filled out the week around 4th of July. We will be looking for coordinators so the committee doesn't have to be at every event. We're planning some budget numbers. There will be at least one event every month in 2026. The committee accepts donations and will be selling items as a fundraiser.
- ii. Ms. Belanger attended a Planning Board meeting, where they heard an application for 97 Portsmouth Ave, a multi-use building with 14 residential units. It was tabled to August 28, with a sitewalk on August 13th. The Planning Board will have no meeting on July 24. There is a CIP meeting on August 14.
- iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- iv. Mr. Chartrand attended the Sustainability Advisory Committee and Conservation Commission. Sustainability is running another styrofoam collection drive this weekend at the DPW. He asked Ms. Roy to let Steve Jordan at the Transfer Station know it's going on.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis attended the Independence Festival; he added that he is on the Board of Governors. At the Festival he welcomed folks on behalf of the Select Board and introduced Senator Hassan as well as Ms. Gilman's husband who read the Declaration of Independence. He thanked Police and Fire, Public Works, Parks and Rec, and Pam McElroy who worked with the museum on permitting.

e. Correspondence

- i. A letter from Eversource about service
- ii. A notice from Xfinity on channel changes
- iii. A notice on the CPCNH rates

- 221 iv. A newsletter from NH Recycles, specifically on the lithium ion battery
222 disposal ban
223 v. The NHMA Legislative Bulletin
224

225 9. Review Board Calendar

- 226 a. The next meetings are July 28, August 11, August 18, Tuesday September 2,
227 September 15, and September 29. The BRC kick off is July 23. Mr.
228 Papakonstantis said he will be attending the Town of Kensington Public Hearing
229 instead.
230

231 10. Non-Public Session

232 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(I). Ms.
233 Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0, and the meeting entered non-public
234 at 8:20 PM. At 9:02 PM Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session. Ms. Gilman seconded.
235 The motion passed 5-0. Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes until the situation is resolved.
236 Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
237
238

239 11. Adjournment

240 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and
241 the meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.
242
243

244 Respectfully Submitted,
245 Joanna Bartell
246 Recording Secretary