

Select Board Meeting
Monday August 11, 2025
6:30 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 6:30 PM.

2. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(b),(I). Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0, and the meeting entered non-public session at 6:30 pm.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session. Mr. Chartrand seconded. Motion passed 5-0, and the Board exited non-public at 6:45 pm.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes indefinitely. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 pm.

3. Public Comment

a. Keith Whitehouse of 61 Westside Drive said many surrounding towns have implemented an "All Veterans" tax credit. Mr. Papakonstantis said we have a committee looking into our tax credits. Ms. Gilman said the committee voted not to go forward with the all-veterans tax credit. Mr. Whitehouse stated that all our neighboring towns have it. Ms. Gilman said she will bring it up to the committee at the next meeting. Mr. Chartrand said anything we give to a group of taxpayers is spread out between all the other taxpayers, so we want to be conservative about these things. Mr. Whitehouse said he doesn't think it's a huge group of people.

b. Andrew Elliott of 42 Washington Street thanked Police and Fire for supporting net zero for the new Police and Fire substation. It may not be net zero on day 1 but being net zero ready is appropriate. If the town is generating power in the solar array, maybe that could be considered as on-site. Mr. Chartrand said he thinks the solar array effectively makes the town net zero.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

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

5. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: July 28, 2025
MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of July 28, 2025 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Appointments and Resignations

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the resignation of Kathy Corson from the 250th Celebration Commission. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the resignation of Dawn Jelley for the Pairpoint Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Discussion/Action Items

a. 79E Extension Request - Mario Ponte Project

Business Development Director Darrent Winham and business owner Mario Ponte were present to discuss this request.

Ms. Belanger recused herself from this discussion.

Mr. Winham presented a covenant for public benefit related to Mr. Ponte's 79-E extension. Mr. Winham said it's been tough for construction, and projects have gone way overbudget. Mr. Ponte is asking for an extension from the end of this month to the end of the year; the project is going well and it will create new housing in our town.

Mr. Ponte said the awning had asbestos behind it, which had to be tested, which led to delays. It had to be removed, and no one could do any other work until that was done. The other subcontractors moved onto another job. There are people there every day now doing something, but they're finding a lot of surprises, as with any renovation of an old building.

Mr. Chartrand said the voters have revoked 79-E, but we had approved this previously. Mr. Papakonstantis said he thinks it's ok to extend it.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to extend the 79-E initiative for 72/29 until December 31, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Belanger was recused and did not vote. The motion passed 4-0.

b. E911 Recommendations for Street Names & Street Addressing

Ms. Roy said the committee voted to name a newly created private right-of-way off of Patricia Avenue "Dragonfly Lane." This is a brand-new right-of-way, not a renaming, so it doesn't affect anyone. They've done the necessary notifications. The name does meet the town ordinance criteria.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to name the newly created private right-of-way providing access to a two-lot subdivision off Patricia Avenue as "Dragonfly Lane", and to number the proposed dwelling(s) accordingly in compliance with Chapter 14 of the Town Ordinance, as depicted on the attached map dated 6/11/24. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. 250 Celebration Commission Update

Ms. Gilman said the 250th Celebration Commission is full of energy and ideas. It's time for budgeting, and we have a time limit in which we need to

89 describe the real dollars. The primary celebration will be during the two weeks
90 with the 4th of July in the middle: June 27 to July 11. We're hoping to start with a
91 band concert, but we have not yet talked to the town band. There may be
92 opportunities for other things during the year, but we may just join other
93 organizations in their plans for Memorial Day, Labor Day, etc. We're looking for
94 something family-friendly and something that reminds people these celebrations
95 are because of what happened in 1776. We'd like volunteers to help us, because
96 we're only 5 or 6 people and won't be able to run all of these things. We're
97 proposing to hire a volunteer coordinator to organize and order supplies. We
98 have a logo, but we're not interested in controlling stock like t-shirts that will have
99 to be given away at the end of the year. You'll be able to order items online
100 instead. This is a separate budget from the town departments, but other
101 departments are coordinating with us regarding their events. We had talked
102 about fireworks at the end of the year, but we need the budget for it.

103 250th Celebration Commission Chair Karen Prior, who was present, said
104 the charge of this commission is to celebrate the year-long 250th anniversary.
105 The dates of June 27 - July 11 are the focus, but our goal is to be the "hub of the
106 wheel" in engaging other organizations on events throughout the year. We're
107 partnering with the American Independence Museum, PEA, the Library, and
108 Parks and Recreation. The American Independence Museum hosts the festival
109 every July 11, and we plan on stepping up tremendously with attractions like the
110 encampment, the gundalow, and a parade. We're looking at how to celebrate
111 that Exeter was the Revolutionary War Center and the State Capital of New
112 Hampshire. We have a lot of stories to tell.

113 Mr. Papakonstantis said he's on the Board of Governors for the American
114 Independence Museum, so there may be a conflict of interest that would lead to
115 him recusing himself. Ms. Gilman said she is also a member of the American
116 Independence Museum. Mr. Chartrand said the Board would still have a quorum
117 without them voting.

118 Ms. Roy said the committee is asking for \$15,000 for the parade, but we
119 only support the holiday parade at \$5,000. Ms. Gilman said this is the estimate
120 that Parks and Rec gave us for an extra holiday. Ms. Prior said we are seeking
121 donations and sponsorships, which will offset the budget request. Ms. Belanger
122 said there is a request for \$5,000 for the Independence Museum Festival; what is
123 planned? Ms. Prior said we want to go big, with an encampment, a gundalow,
124 and possibly getting the cannons going during the fireworks. Ms. Gilman said
125 when the event used to be larger, it was run by the Chamber of Commerce.

126 Ms. Belanger said regarding an intern, the budget doesn't pass until
127 March, and there will be a lot of people vying for interns. What are your plans for
128 finding an intern? Ms. Prior said one idea she had was going through the UNH
129 Event Planning program.

130 Ms. Belanger said she'd love to see a "keep the history alive" theme. Ms.
131 Prior said the mission of the American Independence Museum is to present

132 democracy as an ongoing experiment. She thinks the celebration will be vibrant
133 for this community.

134 Andrew Elliott of 42 Washington Street, a member of the Budget
135 Recommendation Committee, said the town already has a budget for fireworks.
136 Is the \$10,000 for additional fireworks? Ms. Gilman said this is for fireworks at the
137 end of the year. Mr. Chartrand said the BRC will get a swing at this. Mr. Elliot
138 said this calls for an intern, but he thought there would be no new hires next year.
139 Ms. Gilman said it's not really a new hire, they won't have benefits and it will end
140 at the end of the year. Ms. Roy said it's \$10,000. Mr. Elliot asked if this will be a
141 warrant article or just part of the budget, and Ms. Roy said it will be a warrant
142 article. Mr. Elliot said he wants the funds to go into a different account that would
143 roll over. Ms. Gilman said we approved a fund last year, but it's just for these
144 events. Ms. Roy said this fund will sunset. If we were to fundraise more money,
145 we wouldn't take more tax dollars; we would put a cap on the fundraising so
146 there wouldn't be extra.

147 Ms. Cowan said we have to think about the economic impact on our town.
148 We've heard from business owners that there's been a decrease in sales
149 downtown. We shouldn't nickel and dime ourselves from investing in our
150 business base and taxpayers. Ms. Gilman suggested an event for the town
151 businesses at Town Hall. Ms. Belanger suggested a fashion show. Ms. Prior said
152 we're working with Exeter Fine Arts for a cool event at the Folsom Tavern
153 involving artist Sara Koff. Ms. Gilman said we get a logo from the State, but that's
154 the extent of our collaboration with them.

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156 8. Regular Business

157 a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

158 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Jeopardy tax for 104/79/417 in the amount of
159 \$886.00 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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161 b. Permits & Approvals

- 162 i. There were no permits or approvals considered at this meeting.
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164 c. Town Manager's Report

- 165 i. The CIP will go to the Planning Board this Thursday.
166 ii. We have a temporary Town Planner, Carol Ogilvie, who will be in the
167 office Mondays and Thursdays.
168 iii. Clarissa Coppen, our Welfare Administrator, has given her notice. Her
169 last day will be Monday, August 18. We've posted the position and
170 already gotten applications. Pam McElroy will help until we have our new
171 person on board.
172 iv. Nancy Bugbee of Parks and Rec is leaving but will be staying on part-
173 time remote to help with the transition to the new building.

- 174 v. We're down to 8 vacancies in DPW, 4 non-union and 4 union. After the
175 town supported last year's negotiations, we were able to fill several union
176 positions.
- 177 vi. She has a report from Corey Stevens that the town received an issuer
178 rating, an AA+.
- 179 vii. Downstairs at the Town Offices, the inside front glass door will be
180 removed because it's not ADA compliant, pending a better solution.
- 181 viii. 10 Hampton Road needs an extra 30 days, so we applied with the State
182 for a 30-day extension. There were just two or three things that might go
183 over, although we're still aiming for the end of August. We have until
184 September 30th.
- 185 ix. Director Cronin said paving for the Epping Road phase 1 widening project
186 will start tomorrow, August 12, and continue through this week.
187 Commuters should seek alternate routes.
- 188 x. The gas main installation on High Street starts this week and will last 2-3
189 weeks.
- 190
- 191 d. Select Board Committee Reports
- 192 i. Ms. Gilman said the Board heard about the 250th Celebration Committee.
193 She also gave an update on State-level legislative issues.
- 194 ii. Ms. Belanger said she attended a Housing Advisory meeting, where they
195 heard a legislative update. There's an upcoming sitewalk for 97
196 Portsmouth Ave. She will be attending an informational meeting for the
197 School Street project on Wednesday night at the Library, and the
198 Planning Board CIP is Thursday. She will have a hard time doing Housing
199 Advisory due to work commitments for the rest of the year. The Board will
200 discuss this again at the next meeting.
- 201 iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- 202 iv. Mr. Chartrand said the Sustainability Advisory Committee was canceled
203 due to lack of quorum.
- 204 v. Mr. Papakonstantis had no meetings, but he attended the ribbon cutting
205 at Planet Playground and National Night Out, as well as some meetings
206 with town staff.
- 207
- 208 e. Correspondence
- 209 i. A letter that Mr. Papakonstantis wrote in response to the letter from the
210 last meeting.
- 211 ii. An email from Bob Hall on the Exeter Train Station. He's working with him
212 and the DPW, and will put this on an upcoming agenda.
- 213 iii. An email from a resident about Exeter housing stock. In response to the
214 email, he met with the resident last Monday.
- 215 iv. A legislative bulletin from NHMA.
- 216
- 217 9. Review Board Calendar

218 a. The next meetings are August 18, Tuesday September 2, September 15, and
219 September 29.
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221 10. Non-Public Session

222 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(d). Mr.
223 Chartrand seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0, and the meeting entered non-
224 public session at 8:03 PM.
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226 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The
227 motion passed 5-0.
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229 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved. Ms. Belanger
230 seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
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232 11. Adjournment

233 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
234 The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.
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236 Respectfully Submitted,
237 Joanna Bartell
238 Recording Secretary
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