

Select Board Meeting  
Monday December 22, 2025  
6:40 PM  
Nowak Room, Town Offices  
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Nancy Belanger, Dan Chartrand, and Interim Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. Board member Julie Gilman was absent. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:40 PM.

The Board went downstairs to the Wheelwright Room for interviews.

2. Board Interviews

- a. Megan Spencer for the Exeter Housing Authority
- b. Kevin Fleming for the Exeter Housing Authority

The Board reconvened in the Novak Room at 7 PM.

3. Public Comment

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

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations or recognitions.

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: December 8, 2025

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Select Board regular meeting minutes of December 8, 2025 as submitted. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

6. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments made.

7. Discussion/Action Items

- a. 79E Extension Request

Economic Development Director Darren Winham and owner of 85-87 Water Street Mario Ponte were present to discuss this request. Ms. Belanger recused herself from this discussion and vote.

Mr. Winham read his statement:

*Mario A Ponte, Sr., Trustee of the Mario A Ponte, Sr. Revocable Trust, owner of 85-87 Water Street, received from the Town of Exeter six years of tax relief through the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (RSA 79-E). In his application, Mr. Ponte expected to spend \$2.4 million; his costs have risen and*

45 will likely end up closer to \$3 million. As part of receiving 79-E relief, Mr. Ponte,  
46 as all recipients do, needed to provide a Covenant to Protect Public Benefit  
47 (attached). In addition to requiring the project remain a public benefit for the term  
48 of the incentive, the document also dictates that "the contemplated tax relief shall  
49 be null and void if proposed work is not completed by August 31, 2025." Due to  
50 construction delays, the Select Board on August 11, 2025 granted Mr. Ponte an  
51 extension until the end of the year as that is when his builder stated the project  
52 would be finished. Unfortunately, the project has run even longer. The newest  
53 issues causing delays include: a financial and logistical dispute with a neighbor  
54 over the relocation of a telephone pole that provides power to both buildings; a  
55 variety of framing details not depicted in the original plans were added and/or  
56 altered because of the uncommon preexisting building conditions of the 1800s  
57 building; leaks in the walls and basement causing a retail tenant issues with  
58 remaining fully open for the holiday season, and; a vendor error with bathtubs  
59 which, upon arrival, was found to be another model and thus had to be  
60 reordered. This last issue pushed back the drywall schedule. Therefore, Mr.  
61 Ponte is respectfully requesting an extension on his 79-E incentive until March  
62 31, 2026.

63 Mr. Chartrand asked if that is enough time. Mr. Ponte said the project  
64 should be done by February. They're in the sheetrock stage now. Mr. Chartrand  
65 said he would like to give them longer, like June 30.

66 Ms. Roy said the Assessor mentioned that the units would be sold as  
67 condos, where in the application it was apartments. Does that need to be  
68 reviewed by Legal? According to the covenant it needs to be kept in the same  
69 format as approved in the 79E. Mr. Ponte said it will be apartments. After three or  
70 four years he may condominiumize them. Mr. Winham said if he keeps them for  
71 six years, Legal wouldn't have to be involved. Mr. Chartrand said in a previous  
72 project, the loka, we allowed the tax benefits to go forward to those that  
73 purchased condominiums, which was not intended. The tax benefit for the six  
74 years should remain with you alone. Mr. Ponte said he can keep them for six  
75 years. Ms. Roy said she doesn't know whether the Board can determine whether  
76 they are apartments or condos. We should go to Legal.

77 Mr. Papakonstantis suggested extending this request until January so we  
78 can get the matter reviewed by Legal. He said Mr. Ponte will not have to come  
79 back. Ms. Roy said the Board should extend this until January 30 and she will try  
80 to get Legal to review it by the January 5 meeting. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if  
81 extending it to the meeting of February 2 is ok. Mr. Chartrand suggested  
82 extending until February 3rd to cover that meeting.

83 Mr. Papakonstantis asked for a motion to extend the 79E for 72/29 until  
84 February 3, 2026 to allow the Board to further review the request for an  
85 extension into June 30, 2026, but the motion was not made. Mr. Chartrand  
86 suggested adding "tax relief incentive" to the motion.

87 **MOTION:** Ms. Cowan moved to extend the 79E tax relief incentive for 72/29 until February 3,  
88 2026 to allow the Board to review the request for an extension to June 30, 2026. Mr. Chartrand  
89 seconded. Ms. Belanger was recused and did not vote. The motion passed 3-0.

90  
91 b. Complete Streets Update

92 DPW Director Stephen Cronin and Scott Bogle of the Rockingham  
93 Planning Commission were present to give this update.

94 Mr. Cronin said the Master Plan stated that streets should be safe for all  
95 users. The Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan was completed in March 2025, and  
96 states that the Town should adopt a Complete Streets policy, designing roads  
97 that are accessible to all modes of transit. Earlier this year, Dave Sharples  
98 engaged with Scott Bogle at RPC to conduct this study.

99 Mr. Bogle gave a presentation on the Complete Streets project, which  
100 included four elements: reviewing policies from similarly sized towns, community  
101 engagement, developing a policy statement, and developing policy guidelines.  
102 Regarding community engagement, he met regularly with the Master Plan  
103 Oversight committee and held two focus group conversations, one with Town  
104 staff and one with residents and business owners. Themes of outreach included  
105 ensuring that people understand streets aren't just for vehicles; an emphasis on  
106 connectivity; designing for all ages and abilities; and traffic separation wherever  
107 possible. He discussed the different types of streets in Exeter and what Complete  
108 Streets would look like in each.

109 Mr. Bogle said the next steps include having further conversations with  
110 business owners and for the Master Plan Oversight Committee to finish  
111 reviewing the draft for the meeting of January 8th. Their approved draft should be  
112 coming to the Board in the new year.

113 Ms. Belanger said on Washington Street, cars park across from each  
114 other, and it becomes a one-lane road. What can we do about a bike lane there?  
115 Mr. Bogle said he used to live on Washington Street and deliberately parked  
116 across from his neighbors for traffic calming purposes. Generally speaking, bike  
117 lanes wouldn't be appropriate on a neighborhood street. Adding the striping  
118 would channel traffic and give automobiles the sense that they own the road,  
119 rather than it being shared space.

120 Mr. Cronin said with this policy, we're getting recommendations for certain  
121 roadway classifications. What happens with those roads goes through a design  
122 review process. We could have a more robust public participation policy for  
123 roadway design and pedestrian access.

124 Ms. Belanger said regarding the intersection at Front Street and Railroad  
125 Ave, we have trucks that will take a right onto Railroad Ave. Is there a reason  
126 that corner is more squared-off and not angled? Mr. Bogle said that's a way of  
127 slowing people down. This was a concept as part of the bike and pedestrian  
128 master plan. The actual turning radius will come out of the design process.

129 Mr. Chartrand said he loved that streets with a certain typology such as  
130 Winter Street and Washington Street may require special features. He thinks

that's the long-term solution. He also appreciates that Mr. Cronin wants to engage the public and neighborhoods more when we are planning projects. When we've had problems in the past, it's because we didn't engage.

Resident Silas Richards of Lincoln Street said he supports the adoption of Complete Streets in Exeter. Epping Road is a major missed opportunity for Complete Streets. There are safety gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian master plan. Mr. Chartrand asked if the Kingston Road sidewalk extension is an example of what Mr. Richards is looking for. Mr. Richards thanked the Board for extending the sidewalk network, but said we should be thinking beyond sidewalks into a multi-purpose pathway that is 10 or 11 feet to accommodate both walkers and cyclists. He has benefited from Kingston Road sidewalks, but from a cycling standpoint it's a narrow lane. Mr. Chartrand asked how we did on Drinkwater Road, where we intentionally narrowed the road and broadened the shoulders. Mr. Richards said it's not separated but it's a rural road. Still, every extra inch can make a difference between life and death.

Ms. Belanger thanked Mr. Richards and his brother Ben for coming to the Planning Board meetings and having good discussions.

c. 2025 Year-End Encumbrances Review

Finance Director Corey Stevens was present to discuss the encumbrances. Mr. Stevens said this is an annual exercise where he reaches out in December to departments to encumber funds they have contractual obligations on before year end. The total is about \$903,000, which is a bit lighter than the last four or five years. At the BRC, there was a desire by the committee to soak up some of the Capital Outlay funds and obligate them on things we could get started with, especially in the Water/Sewer Department.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the 2025 total encumbrances of \$902,786.53. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

d. Amendment to PD/FD Substation Contract

Mr. Stevens said the Police Station/Fire Substation project is going well. We have a weekly meeting with the Construction Manager and things are moving along. A month ago, he asked the Board to authorize an amendment to our Architect's contract. The fourth amendment needs a further revision to it regarding a carport. In value engineering the building, we shrunk the footprint down. To meet our net zero obligations, we're looking to build a carport to give us another surface to put solar panels on. We considered a pre-built canopy structure or one built in place. The original amendment was for pre-built, with the Engineer only designing the platform, but we decided that we want to build it in place instead. This will cost about \$20,000 more. This amendment allows the Architect and Engineer to do the design work so that our Construction Manager can build it in place.

173 Ms. Roy said a pre-engineered kit is one that has already been designed  
174 by an Architect, but those kits are not available so we need to have our own  
175 Architect design it.

176 Mr. Stevens said this will deplete some of the contingency but will not  
177 cost the project any more.

178 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the Interim Town Manager to execute contract  
179 amendment #4 revision 1 with TGAS Architects for addition design and engineering services  
180 related to the solar canopy. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

181  
182 e. 2025 Annual Report Bid Acceptance

183 Ms. Roy said every year we put out to bid the printing of the annual  
184 report. We received one bid this year, but the person has done it for many years.  
185 We are comfortable with going with them.

186 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to award the bid for the 2025 annual report printing to Select  
187 Print Solutions of Sutton MA in the amount of \$4,245, with the provision that any additional  
188 pages over the specified 225 pages would be charged at a price of 3.2 cents per page. Ms.  
189 Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

190  
191 f. FY26 Budget Discussion

192 Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board will discuss the budget today and at  
193 our January 5 meeting prior to the Budget Hearing of January 20. One of the CIP  
194 warrant articles reviewed at CIP night was presented by the Pairpoint Park  
195 Committee. They're looking for \$35,000 for design and engineering. There was a  
196 robust discussion, but the BRC decided to not recommend the \$35,000 to go on  
197 the warrant article. This park has presented a unique situation. The Board was  
198 asked to accept a donation at short notice without doing due diligence, but the  
199 Board made a motion to accept the donation and it would get in line for CIP. The  
200 Board had many people come forward with ideas and requests for immediate  
201 action, and implemented a committee to come up with ways it could be designed  
202 and funded. Part of their mission statement was to reach out to the public and  
203 ask folks what they'd like to see, and they put out a survey and talked to folks in  
204 person about the park. They came before the Select Board and made a  
205 recommendation. At the BRC, they pledged that if they get \$35,000 on the  
206 warrant, they would fundraise for the money to develop and build the park. The  
207 committee has done everything we've asked them to do and more. He's not  
208 advocating for the \$35,000 warrant article, but the Board should discuss it and  
209 consider meeting them in some way.

210 Ms. Belanger said she felt that some comments at the BRC didn't have a  
211 good understanding of this committee's mission and role. There were comments  
212 about maintenance that isn't part of their mission. They're working so hard to  
213 raise funds to get to the next step. Mr. Chartrand said he's inclined to let this roll  
214 through to the voters, given that the committee will raise the funds to build the  
215 park and not go back to the voters. Would we have a revolt on the BRC in that  
216 case? Mr. Kelly said no. Our charge is to recommend a budget, and what the

Board does from there is your call. Understanding the committee's mission statement wasn't our purview, we look at the budget. It was our understanding that this was too much too soon. Everyone wants more green space in town, but this was put on us without proper due diligence, so let's wait a year to allow them to do some fundraising. If they can raise \$350,000, they could raise 10% more. They're asking the town in a very bad year for money that we don't want to put onto the taxpayers.

Mr. Chartrand said he wants voters to decide because time is of the essence. It would be better if this happened now than a year from now. Mr. Kelly said he disagrees and time is not of the essence.

Ms. Cowan said we have a really tough budget this year and things that we have to pay for. She could fundraise from a picture. The financial crunch that people are going to be feeling is worrisome.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the committee deserved the respect of the conversation with this Board, even if we decide to follow the BRC recommendation. It was a tough budget this year and will be a big request of the voters. 90% of the increase is health insurance, wages, collective bargaining, and the Public Safety Complex. A warrant article would give the legislative body the ability to decide if they want that to impact their taxes. That gives the committee time to fundraise and for the town to see if there's money in other budgets for this. When the original motion was made, it was clear that this would go to the back of the line, but volunteers have stepped in to move it forward. Ms. Cowan said she values the work they've done. Mr. Papakonstantis said three Board members would have to approve it for it to go on the warrant.

Mr. Kelly said we cut \$160,000 off the General Fund budget for a \$27M budget. Adding \$35,000 back in isn't a huge deal, but what happens if the committee can't raise the rest of the money? Or maybe they will knock it out of the park and raise the entire amount, and don't need the \$35,000.

Mr. Kelly said re Water Fund, encumber funds \$200,000 for a variety of projects, our fund balances are already high. Finance and DPW put together \$103,000 to be encumbered.

The Board will discuss the budget again at the January 5 meeting.

## 8. Regular Business

### a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a solar exemption for 24/31 in the amount of \$17,000.00 for the tax year 2025. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

### b. Permits & Approvals

#### i. Pairpoint Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee Park Logos

Pairpoint Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee Chair Steven Jones was present to discuss the committee's logo. Mr. Jones said we are requesting the Board approve a single-use logo already created for the fundraising video for the park and a permanent "flying heron" logo.

261 We are also asking the Board to approve a round and square version of  
262 the permanent logo.

263 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adopt the revised logo for the one purpose of fundraising  
264 designed by Joe Stagnone. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

265  
266 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the two versions of the Pairpoint Park logo for use in  
267 all promotional literature, images, and swag. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

268  
269 ii. 911 Voluntary Change of Address

270 Deputy Chief Jason Fritz was present. E911 committee had three  
271 voluntary change of address requests.

272 1. 81 Front Street Units A-F

273 Deputy Chief Fritz said this building was recently  
274 remodeled into a multi-family.

275 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adopt the change of address for 72/195 to 81 Front Street: 81  
276 Front St. Unit A, 81 Front St. Unit B, 81 Front St. Unit C, 81 Front St. Unit D, 81 Front St. Unit E,  
277 and 81 Front St. Unit F. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

278  
279 a. 77 Newfields Road

280 Deputy Chief Fritz said 75A Newfields Road would like to  
281 be 77 Newfields Road. When we accepted Magnolia  
282 Place, that freed up the number 77.

283 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the change of address 22/7/2 from 75A Newfields  
284 Road to 77 Newfields Road. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

285  
286 b. 120 Front Street, Units A, B, C

287 Deputy Chief Fritz said 120 Front Street currently has a  
288 storefront and two apartments, but the address was never  
289 changed to reflect those. We called the State and they  
290 recommended 120 Front Street, Unit A being the  
291 storefront, B behind the Storefront, and C on the second  
292 floor.

293 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the change of address for 73/17 from 120 Front Street  
294 to 120 Front Street, Units A, B, C. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

295  
296 c. Town Manager's Report

297 i. Ms. Roy said Town Offices will close at noon on Christmas Eve,  
298 Christmas and the day after.

299 ii. She worked with Corey Stevens, Paul Vlasich, and the Police and Fire  
300 Substation team to get the project going.

301 iii. She's been working on personnel issues

302 iv. She's been drafting potential warrant wording for Legal review.

303  
304 d. Select Board Committee Reports

- 305 i. Ms. Belanger said the Planning Board had their second zoning meeting.  
306 All the proposed amendments were approved. There were changes in the  
307 language she will discuss at the Select Board's next meeting. She missed  
308 the Rec Advisory Board meeting but watched it later. They voted to  
309 change the meetings to quarterly next year. There will be a financial  
310 workshop on January 28 to talk about the coming year. David Tovey and  
311 Carolyn went to a seminar in 2023 and are trying to implement what they  
312 learned. She attended the Senior Luncheon, which the community really  
313 appreciated.
- 314 ii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- 315 iii. Mr. Chartrand had no report.
- 316 iv. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Tree Committee, River Advisory, and  
317 Swasey Parkway Trustees meetings were all cancelled. He attended the  
318 employee appreciation lunch.

319  
320 e. Correspondence

- 321 i. Letter regarding snow removal
- 322 ii. Letter regarding Pairpoint Park
- 323

324 9. Review Board Calendar

- 325 a. The next meetings are January 5, Tuesday January 20, February 2, February 17,  
326 and March 2. Deliberative Session is Jan 31 at 9 AM, and Town Election is  
327 March 10.
- 328

329 10. Non-Public Session

330 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Ms.  
331 Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0. The Board entered non-public at  
332 8:32 PM.

333

334 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to exit non-public session. Ms. Belanger seconded. The  
335 motion passed 4-0.

336

337 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved. Ms. Belanger  
338 seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

339

340 11. Adjournment

341 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:57 pm. Mr. Chartrand  
342 seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

343

344 Respectfully Submitted,  
345 Joanna Bartell  
346 Recording Secretary

347  
348