

1 Select Board Meeting  
2 Monday February 2, 2026  
3 6:40 PM  
4 Nowak Room, Town Offices  
5 Final Minutes  
6

7 1. Call Meeting to Order

8 Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Clerk Nancy Belanger, Julie Gilman, Dan  
9 Chartrand, and Interim Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. Vice-Chair  
10 Molly Cowan was absent. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:40 PM.  
11

12 2. Non-Public Session

13 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(l). Ms.  
14 Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0 and the meeting entered non-public  
15 at 6:40 PM.  
16

17 The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.  
18

19 3. Proclamations/Recognitions

20 a. Police Department Awards

21 Police Chief Stephan Poulin recognized School Resource Officer Rya  
22 Khan and Lieutenant Devin West for their recent awards.  
23

24 4. Public Comment

25 a. There was no public comment at this time.  
26

27 5. Approval of Minutes

28 a. Regular Meeting: January 20, 2026

29 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of January 20, 2026 as presented. Ms.  
30 Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.  
31

32 6. Appointments

33 a. Housing Authority Appointment

34 Mr. Papakonstantis said there were two good candidates for this position.  
35 Ms. Belanger said Kevin Fleming was our first applicant and isn't currently on  
36 another Board, whereas Megan Spencer is.

37 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Kevin Fleming to the Exeter Housing Authority as a  
38 full member, term to expire April 30, 2026. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.  
39

40 7. Discussion/Action Items

41 a. Deliberative Session Review -

42 Town Moderator Kate Miller was present to give a recap of the  
43 Deliberative Session. Attorney Miller said we had about 100 voters in attendance,  
44 which is about what's expected. The tone was respectful and engaged, with good

45 questions. There were questions about the changes to the Veteran's Tax Credit,  
46 but that's happening across New Hampshire because of a change in the law. The  
47 Supervisors of the Checklist used the electronic poll pads to check in voters,  
48 which sped up the process. The Select Board, Town staff, and Budget  
49 Committee worked hard to trim the budget prior to the Deliberative Session. The  
50 interim Town Manager did an excellent job of presenting things, without any  
51 technical glitches. Finance Director Corey Stevens also did a good job supporting  
52 her.

53 Mr. Chartrand thanked Public Works Director Stephen Cronin for  
54 addressing the bond articles for the water projects and the street sweeper.

55 Mr. Papakonstantis thanked Ms. Miller and asked her to come back to a  
56 Select Board meeting prior to the election.

57  
58 b. Exeter Country Club (ECC) Discretionary Easement

59 ECC President Marc Carbonneau and Attorney Chris Hilson of  
60 O'Donoghue, Tucker, and Ciandella were present to discuss this request, as well  
61 as Laura Spector-Morgan from Mitchell Municipal Group who was representing  
62 the Town of Exeter.

63 Attorney Hilson said the Country Club was created in 1889 and is a public  
64 golf course. The leadership has striven to keep membership fees down and the  
65 greens fees as low as possible. Only 40% of the revenue is from the members;  
66 60% is from the community. There's a conservation easement on a large portion  
67 of the course, at the upper end. There is also a discretionary easement per RSA  
68 79E on the lower end of the course. The remainder of the course and the  
69 clubhouse are subject to ad valorem taxation. The clubhouse was built in the  
70 1950s and needs to be replaced or upgraded. The club can't afford to do it  
71 through conventional debt in order to keep the greens fees low. The plan is to  
72 sell a portion and use the revenue to renovate the clubhouse. Under 79E, you  
73 need 10 acres to be eligible. If we sell the portion, it will leave 7 acres. This land  
74 still meets the 79E criteria of being for the public benefit because the course is  
75 public. We are looking to "stack the easements" to bring the remaining portion  
76 above 10 acres. There's nothing that says the easement can't be on already  
77 encumbered land. There's already an additional Town easement on the land  
78 currently part of the discretionary easement. This would allow the club to sell the  
79 land and use the proceeds to restore the clubhouse, without taking on obligations  
80 that would make the fees beyond the ability of public members to pay. The  
81 easement expires March 31 and has to be renewed, so there needs to be a  
82 decision on this. The renewal is for a minimum of 10 years, but it could be longer.  
83 If the Board were to grant the easement, you could remove it upon finding a  
84 hardship, but there's a penalty associated with that.

85 Mr. Chartrand asked if the discretionary easement has to be contiguous.  
86 Attorney Spector-Morgan said the definition of golf course is a parcel of 10 acres  
87 or more of land used in the playing of golf; it does not say "contiguous." Mr.  
88 Chartrand asked if the developer would accept 7 acres instead of 10. Mr.

89 Carbonneau said they're looking to put in between 9 and 11 homes. It's possible  
90 we could end up selling less acreage if they don't need it for density reasons. We  
91 would like to maintain an easement to the third tee box, as it's our only par 5 and  
92 losing it would change the whole rating of the course. Mr. Papakonstantis asked  
93 if they have an interested developer. Mr. Carbonneau said yes, we're finalizing a  
94 purchase and sale.

95 Ms. Belanger said she would like to keep the conservation land out of this  
96 deal if possible. Since it doesn't have to be contiguous, is there another three  
97 acres somewhere that we can use to compensate? Attorney Hilson said the  
98 entire north area of the course has already been eased. There's no more land to  
99 submit. The conservation easement could be expanded into the land that's  
100 currently a discretionary easement, but that would entail developing land that's  
101 currently conserved. In Hampton, we have to make a lot line adjustment in  
102 conservation land, and the Department of Charitable Trusts is getting involved as  
103 they feel they have jurisdiction. Submitting a new portion to the conservation  
104 easement would be reducing the flexibility that the ECC has, which we'd like to  
105 avoid. Ms. Belanger asked where else they could find the other three acres, and  
106 Attorney Hilson and Mr. Carbonneau said there are none. Ms. Belanger said  
107 she's not comfortable with stacking three acres that are already in conservation.  
108 Mr. Carbonneau said the conservation land would have to remain a golf course.  
109 You wouldn't want to bring the conservation land right up to the line of the  
110 clubhouse in case you ever wanted to extend it or build something.

111 Attorney Spector-Morgan said she met with Attorney Hilson and Mr.  
112 Chartrand [she later clarified that she meant Mr. Carbonneau] and they had an  
113 alternative idea. The benefit you get with the discretionary easement that you  
114 don't get with the conservation easement is that this has to remain a public golf  
115 course. If you're stacking with three acres, why not stack with the entire golf  
116 course, and ensuring that the whole course remains public for the next ten  
117 years? Mr. Chartrand asked if that's ok, and Attorney Spector-Morgan said it's  
118 legal. The conservation easement requires that it remains open space and open  
119 to public recreation, but does not require that it remain a public golf course. Mr.  
120 Carbonneau said conceptually we're ok with that, but we're still getting legal  
121 advice and haven't voted on it. It would allow us to continue running as a golf  
122 course, which is the #1 goal. Mr. Chartrand said he thinks the Jady Hill  
123 Neighborhood would appreciate it continuing as a public golf course. He is a  
124 neighbor, and a delighted neighbor. There's sledding and cross-country skiing on  
125 the course in the winter. They're open to people walking their dogs in the winter.  
126 They're a great neighbor. Putting that second layer of easement on almost the  
127 entire course will win some points with the neighbors and the Land Use Boards.

128 Ms. Belanger asked if they would consider a term longer than ten years.  
129 Attorney Hilson said he would recommend a longer term, but he wouldn't  
130 recommend it in perpetuity. Ms. Belanger asked them to bring back to the next  
131 meeting what term they would consider.

132 Ms. Gilman said she wanted to clarify that this is related to RSA 79C, not  
133 79E. We repealed 79E so she didn't want to confuse folks at home.

134 Mr. Papakonstantis asked when the next ECC Board meeting is, and Mr.  
135 Carbonneau said on Monday. Mr. Papakonstantis asked them to come back on  
136 Tuesday February 17th. Attorney Spector-Morgan said she could not be present,  
137 and Ms. Belanger asked if she could confer with Mr. Carbonneau following their  
138 Board meeting.

139 Ms. Belanger said if this comes before the Planning Board, she would  
140 recuse herself there, as she's part of this conversation at the Select Board.

141  
142 c. Water/Sewer Capacity Request and Proposed Funding Partnership for High  
143 Street Sewer Improvements - Lindt/Sprungli

144 Public Works Director Stephen Cronin, Water/Sewer Advisory Board  
145 Chair Bob Kelley, Lindt Director of Environment, Health, and Safety Melanie  
146 Peyeur, Lindt VP of Operations Giovanna Maurer, and Mark Stevens, the  
147 Manager of the Stratham Industrial Park, were present to discuss this proposal.

148 Mr. Cronin said Lindt has been a water/sewer customer of the Town since  
149 1988, and over time their growth has put them up against the industrial park's  
150 sewer capacity limitations of 75,000 gallons per day. Lindt jointly funded a sewer  
151 capacity study with the Town; addressing those defects found was the reason we  
152 brought forward the High Street Cross-Country Sewer Project in the CIP. Lindt is  
153 proposing a funding partnership that would advance those improvements.

154 Ms. Peyeur gave a presentation about Lindt. They have been a  
155 water/sewer customer since 1988 and have had a discharge permit since 2010.  
156 They rely on water to clean [chocolate] molds and tanks as well as to cool their  
157 buildings. Their discharge is limited not only by the permit but also by the park-  
158 wide capacity of 75,000 gallons per day. Although the park remains within the  
159 limit, Lindt has outgrown its allocation. In 2020, Lindt funded a study with  
160 Underwood Engineers that identified hydrologic constraints on Hampton Road  
161 and High Street which have prevented the allocation of additional capacity to the  
162 industrial park. Completing the High Street Bridge portion of the improvement  
163 plan would unlock additional capacity. Lindt is prepared to invest \$1.8M to  
164 complete this work. This increase would support Lindt through the maximum  
165 production level expected at this facility.

166 Mr. Chartrand said Lindt has 1,300 employees; what would that go up to  
167 with further expansion? Ms. Peyeur said we don't anticipate an increase. Ms.  
168 Maurer said there would be additional headcount, because there could be  
169 additional lines with this significant increase in capacity.

170 Mr. Kelley said Lindt came to the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee  
171 meeting in September of last year. There were some legalities to work out so we  
172 didn't vote, but they came again in January 2026 and we voted 4-0 to support  
173 this project. This is a singular agreement for a very special case, and should not  
174 be construed as a precedent for development. This would allow us to partially  
175 fund a project on the CIP that has been deferred for a number of years.

176 Ms. Gilman asked if she should recuse herself, since she lives on High  
177 Street. Mr. Papakonstantis said he doesn't think there's a conflict of interest.

178 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve Lindt USA's Water/Sewer capacity request and the  
179 proposed funding partnership with Stratham Industrial Park for the High Street Sewer  
180 Improvement Project, and further to authorize Town Staff to finalize the agreement documents.  
181 Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

182  
183 d. Great Bay Estuary Intermunicipal Agreement - Stephen Cronin, Public Works  
184 Director

185 Mr. Cronin said we are looking to renew our agreement with the Municipal  
186 Alliance for Adaptive Management (MAAM). They were formed in 2021 in  
187 response to the EPA Great Bay general total nitrogen permit. This allowed for a  
188 regional management approach rather than requiring individual facility upgrades.  
189 This amendment would extend the agreement term through June 30, 2031.

190 Ms. Belanger said on page 3, there's one paragraph where they redacted  
191 "no more than \$500,000." What is the reason for that? Mr. Cronin said the costs  
192 vary from year to year depending on grant funding. In the past two years, we've  
193 exceeded the \$500,000; collectively it was \$642,000 in 2025 and we're projecting  
194 \$652,000 in 2026. The permit expires in February but they are extending it  
195 administratively so we don't expect new regulation in the short term, but when it  
196 is renewed there may be new requirements so that dollar figure will rise. Each  
197 town pays a portion of that based on their permitted wastewater treatment plant  
198 flow. In 2026, we would pay roughly \$89,000.

199 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the amendment to renew and update the  
200 Intermunicipal Agreement for development of an adaptive water quality management plan for  
201 Great Bay Estuary and to further authorize the interim Town Manager or their Designee to sign  
202 the amendment. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

203  
204 Mr. Papakonstantis thanked the Public Works Department for their work  
205 during the recent snowstorm.

206  
207 e. 79E Extension - Mario Ponte  
208 Economic Development Director Darren Winham and property owner  
209 Mario Ponte were present for this discussion item.

210 Ms. Belanger recused herself from this discussion and vote.

211 Mr. Chartrand apologized to Mr. Ponte for a statement he made at the  
212 last meeting that was incorrect.

213 Mr. Winham said at the previous meeting, we were asking for an  
214 extension on 79E because Mr. Ponte was given six years but the construction  
215 project has gone long. He suggests going long enough that we don't have to  
216 come back.

217 Mr. Ponte said we're in the sheetrock/painting phase. We've had  
218 problems with neighbors holding us up. Until made him pay to relocate a utility

219 pole in the back. He also had to pay for Alan's electrical work because he  
220 refused to do it and it was holding up the project.

221 Mr. Papakonstantis said the last time, they were requesting March 31,  
222 2026. Mr. Ponte said the contractor said it would be done by then, but the project  
223 has been delayed multiple times. Mr. Winham said Mr. Chartrand suggested  
224 June 30.

225 Ms. Roy said one legal question from last time was if it were allowable for  
226 Mr. Ponte to change these from apartments to condos. Town Counsel told us  
227 that it is allowable under 79E; we can't make it stay apartments. She added that  
228 this is the last 79E project that we have. If something like 79E were to come  
229 back, it would be in a different form and would have to go through Town Meeting  
230 again.

231 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to extend the 79E incentive for 72/29 until June 30, 2026. Ms.  
232 Gilman seconded. Ms. Belanger was recused and did not vote. The motion passed 3-0.

233

234 8. Regular Business

235 a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

236 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 104/79/132C in the amount of  
237 \$270 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

238

239 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 86/49 in the amount of \$2,000  
240 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

241

242 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Current Use Application A10 for 113/5 for 7.5  
243 acres for tax year 2026. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

244

245 b. Permits & Approvals

246 i. There were no permits or approvals considered.

247

248 c. Town Manager's Report

249 i. Ms. Roy thanked Moderator Miller for a great Deliberative Session.

250 ii. She's been working on various projects the Board heard about tonight,  
251 such as the Country Club and Lindt Chocolate.

252 iii. She and Finance Director Stevens have been working on the Public  
253 Safety Complex. They are removing a lot of snow. They are planning to  
254 start the foundation in the next few weeks.

255 iv. She and Mr. Stevens worked on the budget report given at the  
256 Deliberative Session.

257 v. Mr. Stevens has been working on W2s and end of year reporting.

258 vi. We're getting ready for voting on the second Tuesday in March.

259 vii. Mr. Papakonstantis said in the past, we've done videos about projects like  
260 the Public Safety Complex or the Revaluation. Can we do one about the  
261 budget and get it out to Exeter TV? Ms. Belanger asked that we include  
262 something about the budget process in the video.

263 d. Select Board Committee Reports

- 263 i. Ms. Gilman attended a Heritage Commission meeting where the Chair  
264 proposed starting a Town Preservation Award. The Heritage  
265 Commission's only budget is for a Recording Secretary, so the award  
266 would be pretty small. She also attended a Tax Exemption and Credit  
267 Advisory Committee meeting where they talked about what comes next.  
268 ii. Ms. Belanger attended a Planning Board meeting where Ms. Roy gave an  
269 update on the Police Station and Fire Substation. They also heard an  
270 application for Phillips Exeter to build an addition onto the gymnasium.  
271 RiverWoods came for an extension on an application approved in  
272 February 2025, and they were granted an extension through February  
273 2029. The Planning Board also had a Master Plan discussion; the Master  
274 Plan subcommittee is reviewing final comments for the Complete Streets  
275 design and will come before the Planning Board at a future meeting.  
276 iii. Mr. Chartrand attended a Facilities Advisory Committee meeting. They  
277 are in the final phases of putting together an RFP for the building use  
278 assessment. It will be ready in a few weeks.  
279 iv. Mr. Papakonstantis attended a Swasey Park Trustee meeting, but there's  
280 not much going on in the wintertime. The Coastal Resiliency group met  
281 and will be holding a public meeting in March.

282 e. Correspondence

- 283 i. The NHMA Legislative Update  
284

285 9. Review Board Calendar

- 286 a. The next meetings are Tuesday February 17, March 2, March 16, and March 30.  
287 The election is March 10. On February 9 at 6 PM, we will hold a public meeting  
288 for folks to come in and talk about their hopes for the next Town Manager. Ms.  
289 Belanger said the SAU 16 Deliberative Session is Wednesday.  
290

291 10. Other Business

292 Mr. Papakonstantis said this year's annual report is dedicated to Rob Ficara, who  
293 is a decades-long community leader.  
294

295 11. Non-Public Session

- 296 a. There was no non-public session called at this time.  
297

298 12. Adjournment

299 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0 and  
300 the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.  
301

302  
303 Respectfully Submitted,  
304 Joanna Bartell  
305 Recording Secretary