

Select Board Meeting
Monday March 2, 2026
6:30 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Clerk Nancy Belanger, Julie Gilman, and Dan Chartrand were present at this meeting.

Members Absent: Vice-Chair Molly Cowan

Interim Town Manager Melissa Roy was also present. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:30 PM.

2. Ballot Machine Training for Select Board Members

- a. Town Clerk Andie Kohler led a training session for the new ballot machines.

3. Public Comment

- a. Keith Whitehouse said there will be a table for Pairpoint Park at the election. He showed the Board a shovel used to break ground on the water treatment plant in 1972 by his great-grandfather George Bean.
- b. Jay Childs of 7 Hunter Lane and Lisa Wilson of 6 Robin Lane thanked the Select Board for their remarks about their father Bill Childs, as well as the community of Exeter for their condolences and memories. Ms. Wilson said they will donate a painting of his to the Town Offices.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations or recognitions at this meeting.

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: February 17, 2026

Corrections: Ms. Belanger said on page 3, line 118, it says "Ms. Belanger said she ran the numbers" but she actually requested that the numbers be run and Janet in our Assessor's Office ran them. In line 216, Ben Richards should be Silas Richards.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of February 17, 2026 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

6. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

7. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Election Preparation

Town Moderator Kate Miller was present to discuss the election, which will be March 10 from 7 AM - 8 PM at the Talbot Gym at 30 Linden Street. There is an accessible entrance on the side of the building. Everyone should bring a photo ID, but if the resident knows the poll workers, individuals can vouch for them instead. The ballot is five pages, three for the town and one for each School District. With the new voting machines, if there is an irregularity the ballot will go to the back of the machine to be hand counted after the polls close. People who are not registered can register at the election if they bring all their documentation.

Ms. Gilman asked about hand counting - if someone requests for it to not go through the machine, how will it be handled? Attorney Miller said if they wish their ballot to be hand-counted, they can put it in the hand-counting slot themselves.

b. Heart Safe Community

Fire Chief Justin Pizon and Bill Wood of EMS were present to discuss this item. Fire Chief Justin Pizon said in 2020, he was tasked with figuring out how Exeter could become a heart-safe community. Kicked off a citizen CPR program at the High School. This ended with Covid, but then we started doing CPR classes at the Fire Station. The community has to be familiar with CPR and using AEDs to qualify. He then handed the program off to Deputy Chief Ryan Booth and Kevin St. James to handle the paperwork. Advanced Cardiac Life Support or ACLS is part of paramedic licensing. You have to have ACLS providers ready to respond, and we qualify.

Bill Wood said this program has existed at the State level since 2005. In New Hampshire, we respond to 200+ adult cardiac arrests a month. When someone's down, every minute of delay to get their heart beating is a 10% less chance of survival. In a rural state, the issue is travel time. CPR is to buy time to get an AED to the patient. Anyone trained or untrained in CPR can follow the AED instructions. There is no liability for its use.

Mr. Wood presented Chief Pizon with a certificate of appreciation to the Town of Exeter for its efforts in improving the survival of sudden cardiac arrests and for meeting the criteria to be designated a heart-safe community. He also presented him with a sign for the Town Offices.

Ms. Belanger asked if there is an AED in Town Buildings, and Chief Pizon said yes, all Town buildings and Police Cruisers have them.

c. SB245 Emergency Billing

Chief Justin Pizon and Deputy Chief Ryan Booth of the Fire Department were present to discuss this item. Chief Pizon said SB245 allows us to negotiate bills with private insurance companies. Medicare, Medicaid, and Tricare only reimburse a certain amount; the payment is \$470 from Medicare. This is hurting the private ambulance services particularly. The current rate is Medicare plus 100%, but the new negotiated rate is 325% of Medicare. These rates will be in place through December 2027. We have about an 80% collection rate. This is

projected to bring in \$113,000 more in ambulance receivables annually without having to bill users or having it go to collections. The five insurance companies have agreed to reimburse us at 325% of Medicare rate.

Mr. Chartrand asked if this new situation will build up the Ambulance Revolving Fund reserves. Chief Pizon said that's the goal. His five-year plan is to be giving back \$250,000 in surplus to the General Fund.

Mr. Chartrand said he would like to have a report on an annual basis as part of the motion. Chief Pizon said we will provide notice if the State adjusts rates. There will be complete transparency.

Ms. Belanger said she likes that Town Counsel will review this.

MOTION (not voted): Ms. Belanger moved that upon review and approval of Town Counsel, to authorize the Fire Chief or their designee to enter into negotiations with the appropriate insurance companies doing business in New Hampshire, using the State of New Hampshire standard contract application to adjust ambulance billing rates as required based on the direction set forth in SB245 and to further authorize the Fire Chief to prepare reports to the Select Board with data as available. Mr. Chartrand seconded.

Ms. Gilman asked that the motion specify that this is SB 245 from 2025, as there could be another SB 245 someday. Ms. Belanger withdrew her motion and Mr. Chartrand withdrew his second.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to, upon review and approval of Town Counsel, authorize the Fire Chief or their designee to enter into negotiations with the appropriate insurance companies doing business in New Hampshire, using the State of New Hampshire standard contract application to adjust ambulance billing rates as required based on the direction set forth in SB245 (2025) and to further request the Fire Chief present data to the Select Board as available. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 110/2/66 in the amount of \$189.00 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 63/102/1 in the amount of \$195.10 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve Veterans Credits for 71/10/4 and 86/20/4 in the amount of \$2,000.00 each for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 104/79/204 in the amount of \$500.00 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 104/79/11 and 60/9 in the amount of \$152,251.00 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Religious Exemption for 29/21/E in the amount of \$1,546,700.00 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Religious Exemption for 29/26 for \$578,100.00 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Religious Exemption for 95/61 in the amount of \$777,500.00 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 73/292 in the amount of \$592,000 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Gilman said there is a bill in the House for 501C3 organizations not to have to put in an exemption application every year.

b. Permits & Approvals

i. Donation Acceptance – Police Department Comfort Dog Program

Mr. Papakonstantis said PEA had their annual “winter frolic” and raised \$10,000 for area food pantries. They designated part of that money to the Police Department for Maple, the Town’s comfort dog.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to accept the cash donation of \$1,775 from the Phillips Exeter Winter Frolic silent auction to support our comfort dog Maple. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

c. Town Manager’s Report

i. Ms. Roy said last Tuesday, we swore in Deputy Chief Josh McCain as the interim Police Chief.

ii. On Feb 23, we hired a replacement for Barb McEvoy, Dawn Faringo.

iii. She spent time working with Niko and Corey Stevens on the budget podcast to educate our voters.

iv. She worked with DPW director Cronin and Interim Chief McCain to declare a snow emergency.

v. She attended the Facilities Advisory Committee meeting and the voter education night at RiverWoods to present the proposed 2026 budget.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

i. Ms. Gilman said the Heritage Commission is going forward with the preservationist of the year award for two people. She and Chair Francoise Elise led a tour of the Apothecary for North Bennet Street School preservation architecture program.

- 176 ii. Ms. Belanger attended a Planning Board meeting, where they had
177 a second discussion on the Exeter Complete Street design.
178 They're going to meet one more time about this on March 12,
179 2026.
- 180 iii. Mr. Chartrand said he attended a Facilities Advisory meeting.
181 Chair Mark Leighton conveyed the Facilities Assessment RFP to
182 Melissa Roy. Mr. Chartrand also attended the Train Station
183 Committee meeting, and that group is getting organized.
- 184 iv. Mr. Papakonstantis attended interim Chief McCain's swearing in.
185 He thanked Exeter TV for their video with him and Corey Stevens.
186 He attended RiverWoods to go over the warrant. He sat in on the
187 Coastal Resiliency Grant meeting; their next public meeting is
188 March 23 from 6 - 8 PM.

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190 2. Correspondence

- 191 a. The NHMA Legislative Bulletin
192

193 9. Review Board Calendar

- 194 a. The next meetings are March 16, March 30, April 13, April 27, May 4, May 18,
195 June 1, June 15, and June 29.
196

197 10. Non-Public Session

198 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A 3:II(a). Mr.
199 Chartrand seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0 and the meeting entered non-
200 public at 8:10 PM. Ms. Cowan called in to join the non-public session.
201

202 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session at 8:47 PM. Ms. Gilman seconded.
203 The motion passed 5-0 via role call vote.
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205 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved. Ms. Belanger
206 seconded. The motion passed 5-0 via role call vote.
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208 11. Adjournment

209 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:48 PM. Ms. Belanger
210 seconded. The motion passed 5-0 via role call vote.
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212
213 Respectfully Submitted,
214 Joanna Bartell
215 Recording Secretary
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