

1 Select Board Meeting
2 Monday March 30, 2026
3 7 PM
4 Nowak Room, Town Offices
5 Final Minutes
6

7 1. Call Meeting to Order

8 Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Nancy Belanger,
9 Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, and Interim Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this
10 meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM.
11

12 2. Police Department - Swearing In

- 13 a. Town Clerk Andrea Kohler swore in Josh McCain as Police Chief.
14

15 3. Bid Opening - Groundwater Supply Improvement Project

- 16 a. Northeast Earth Mechanics LLC of Pittsfield NH: Schedule A, \$2,461,900;
17 Schedule B, \$787,900; Total base bid, \$3,249,800; Schedule C, \$1,234,525.
18 Total bid, \$4,484,325.

- 19 b. N. Granese and Sons, Inc.: Schedule A, \$1,570,000; Schedule B, \$1,029,800;
20 Total base bid, \$2,599,800; Schedule C, \$1,277,950. Total bid, \$3,877,750.

21 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to refer the bids to Public Works to make a recommendation to
22 the Select Board. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
23

24 4. Public Comment

- 25 a. Mark Furlong of 20 Forrest Street asked for an update on the Park Street Bridge
26 project. Mr. Papakonstantis said Mr. Cronin will invite the State and CSX to a
27 Select Board meeting very soon. Mr. Furlong said if the budget has double-digit
28 tax increases next year, people will be angry about it. Tax caps were on the
29 ballot in other communities. He would like to see the Board take a fiscally
30 conservative approach to the FY27 budget. Also, Exeter does a lot of bonding;
31 the Board should discuss the minimum level. He's not sure \$400,000 is that
32 number. Mr. Papakonstantis said we've already started working on the FY27
33 budget because it will take a lot of effort. Mr. Chartrand said the Street Sweeper
34 would not have been a bonded item, but if we do it as a bond there's an SRF
35 loan forgiveness component. Mr. Furlong said that wasn't clear from the warrant.
36

37 5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- 38 a. There were no proclamations or recognitions at this meeting.
39

40 6. Approval of Minutes

- 41 a. Special Meeting: March 11, 2026

- 42 i. Ms. Belanger said line 10 there is an extra word. It says "Molly Cowan will
43 joined" but it should read "Molly Cowan joined."

44 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of March 11,
45 2026 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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47 b. Regular Meeting: March 16, 2026

48 i. Corrections: Mr. Chartrand said on page 7, line 265, “The Train
49 Committee” should read “The Train Station Committee.” Ms. Gilman said
50 at line 128, it’s using the wrong form of “they’re.”

51 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 16,
52 2026 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Cowan abstained as she was not present on
53 March 16. The motion passed 4-0-1.

54

55 c. Special Meeting: March 19, 2026

56 i. Mr. Papakonstantis said this meeting was on a Thursday, not a Monday.

57 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of March 19,
58 2026 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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60 7. Appointments

61 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Elaine Hays as alternate to the Planning Board, term
62 to expire April 2028. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

63

64 8. Discussion/Action Items

65 a. Requests for Future Public Hearings - Melissa Roy, Interim Town Manager and
66 Stephen Cronin, Public Works Director

67 Ms. Roy said she and Mr. Cronin have been working with two different
68 neighborhoods on various issues. The first is the Wadleigh Street Neighborhood,
69 which is looking to put in a three-way stop. Any time we add signage in that way,
70 we need to have a public hearing. The other neighborhood is Cass Street, where
71 we have a resident who would like a “no parking” sign on one side of the street.

72 Mr. Cronin said Public Works and Public Safety found that there is some
73 merit to their concerns, but we’d like the input of the whole neighborhood.
74 Wadleigh went through the Planning Board process and some changes were
75 made, but there are additional concerns. Regarding Cass, there may not be a
76 consensus about the whole road but he wants to hear their concerns.

77 Mr. Papakonstantis said he emailed with folks in the Wadleigh Street
78 neighborhood and it’s worth having the public hearing. The Board agreed.

79 **MOTION:** Ms. Cowan moved to initiate the public hearing process for the following two
80 requests: the Wadleigh Street Neighborhood and the Cass Street Neighborhood. Ms. Belanger
81 seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

82

83 b. Town Manager Search Update – Melissa Roy, Interim Town Manager

84 Mr. Papakonstantis read a statement about the next Town Manager, Paul
85 Cohen. He will begin on May 26, 2026. The Board commented on their positive
86 impressions of Mr. Cohen through the interview process. Mr. Papakonstantis said
87 we are waiving the residency requirement for the position.

88 Mr. Chartrand thanked the interim Town Manager and the Finance
89 Director for their work for the last eight months.

- 90
91 c. Planning and Conservation & Sustainability Department Grant Update - Dave
92 Sharples, Planning Director & Kristen Murphy, Conservation & Sustainability
93 Planner

94 Mr. Papakonstantis said he asked for an update on the value of the
95 grants Kristen Murphy and Dave Sharples had gotten over the years. Ms. Roy
96 discussed the memo in the packet. She added that Parks and Rec Director Greg
97 Bisson also got grants for 10 Hampton Road and Planet Playground. Mr. Cronin
98 and Police and Fire also get grants. Ms. Belanger asked for an update every six
99 months.

- 100
101 d. Investment Policy Review – Corey Stevens, Finance Director

102 Mr. Stevens said he's done this review annually each year. At the end of
103 2025, he suggested doing this earlier in the year and giving an update on the
104 prior year investment results. The purpose of the policy is to give us guidelines
105 on what to do with public funds that aren't immediately needed for expenditures.
106 Our objectives are safety and liquidity. Our approach is conservative. 30 and 60
107 day CDs or sometimes more if there is an attractive interest rate. In January,
108 changed to TD Bank. They've helped us ensure all of our cash is invested in an
109 interest-bearing account. We've also strengthened our deposit policies; we don't
110 have to send people to the bank anymore. The General Fund Average rate of
111 interest return is \$500,000, and we made \$64,000 more than that. The TIF
112 earned \$175,000 of interest income. Cash and CD was a 70/30 split. Policy calls
113 for a limit of 75% in CDs at one time.

114
115 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to readopt the town's investment policy for the investment of
116 public funds in accordance with RSA 41:9VII. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

117
118 9. Regular Business

- 119 a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

120 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Timber Tax for 65/118 in the amount of \$8.72 for
121 tax year 2026. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

122
123 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an Abatement for 65/127/A in the amount of
124 \$20,242.04 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

125
126 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Solar Exemption for 70/73 in the amount of
127 \$12,000 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

128
129 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 86/20/4 and 95/64/29 in the
130 amount of \$500 each for tax year 2026. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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132 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 64/5 and 68/6/147 in the
133 amount of \$2,500 each for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

134
135 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 101/8/4 in the amount of
136 \$1,000 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

137
138 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an All Veterans Credit for 95/64/36, 54/4/11, 26/22,
139 68/6/115, 68/6/241, and 68/6/121 in the amount of \$500 each for tax year 2026. Mr. Chartrand
140 seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

141
142 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 95/64/49, 104/35,
143 95/64/168, 104/79/226, 95/64/365, and 104/79/125 in the amount of \$198,000 each for tax year
144 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. Mr. Chartrand asked if \$198,000 is the value of the property that is
145 reduced and then the taxes are figured on that. Mr. Papakonstantis said yes. The motion
146 passed 5-0.

147
148 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 64/105/32 in the amount of
149 \$307,000 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

150
151 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 95/53 in the amount of
152 \$238,000 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

153
154 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to deny an Elderly Exemption for 95/64/65 for tax year 2026. Mr.
155 Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

156
157 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Blind Exemption for 52/77 in the amount of
158 \$25,000 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

159
160 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Religious Exemption for 91/32/E in the amount of
161 \$2,879,900 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

162
163 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Religious Exemption for 73/143 in the amount of
164 \$1,037,200 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

165
166 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 65/146 in the amount of
167 \$2,735,100 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

168
169 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 65/129/1 in the amount of
170 \$12,434,400 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

171
172 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 65/128 in the amount of
173 \$42,400 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

174

175 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 65/130 in the amount of
176 \$14,928,400 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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178 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 61/131 in the amount of
179 \$51,821,200 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

180
181 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 71/47/1 in the amount of
182 \$0 for tax year 2026. She added that this is the Hospital right-of-way. Ms. Gilman seconded.
183 The motion passed 5-0.

184
185 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 86/10/10 86/10/11 in the
186 amount of \$100 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

187
188 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 65/131/3 in the amount of
189 \$3,988,700 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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191 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 71/48/E in the amount of
192 \$74,800 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

193
194 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 63/8 in the amount of
195 \$328,300 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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197 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 82/13 in the amount of
198 \$4,097,900 for tax year 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

199
200 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve a Charitable Exemption for 72/206 in the amount of
201 \$1,581,600 for tax year 2026. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- 202
203 b. Permits & Approvals
204 i. Seacoast Eat Local
205 Parks & Recreation Director Greg Bisson and Skyler Amsten of
206 Seacoast Eat Local were present for this discussion item.
207 Mr. Bisson said the request is regarding alcohol sample sales at
208 the Farmer's Market.
209 Ms. Amsten said that Seacoast Eat Local has been managing
210 Farmer's Markets since 2007. Alcohol vendors have been a big portion of
211 the Farmer's Market, and sampling has been a part of it, but it's not
212 creating a culture of drinking. Samples must be consumed and
213 completely finished at the vendor booth. Customers cannot add samples
214 to a personal beverage. Starting this year, samples will be sold, so no
215 free samples will be given. We've set a maximum of 2 alcohol vendors at
216 the Exeter Farmer's Market. Individuals just looking to drink should go
217 elsewhere. These are high-end alcohol products, priced at \$30-50, so the
218 ability to sample them is significant. According to the vendors, it makes a

219 big difference in their sales. All of the licensing and locations are on file.
220 The sellers are very well versed in following policies. She's never had a
221 problem with an alcohol vendor or alcohol in general at the markets.
222 Ms. Roy said up until this point, Exeter has asked for no samples.
223 The State designates a farmer's market as an event with at least two
224 agricultural growers or sales. Another organization could rent out the
225 Parkway and as long as they had two agricultural vendors, they could do
226 alcohol sampling and sales. Until now, we have said that's too broad.
227 Mr. Papakonstantis said the only time alcohol is served presently
228 on the Parkway is the Beer & Chili Fest, which is an annual event that
229 comes before the Board every year. Ms. Roy said that event has a
230 perimeter around it. The Farmer's Market is not cordoned off. It's also a
231 town event. Mr. Papakonstantis said other organizations could permit
232 something and want alcohol, and get there by having two agricultural
233 vendors present.
234 Mr. Chartrand asked if we could have experience with a vendor for
235 a certain number of years before we allow this. Mr. Bisson said that would
236 be tough to enforce. Mr. Chartrand said we know that that Seacoast Eat
237 Local run a tight ship, based on years of experience.
238 Mr. Bisson said we're recommending that all vendors are insured,
239 with the town co-insured. Each will have an alcohol permit for the six
240 months of the event. With a one-off event, a vendor may not want to
241 come in if there is an additional fee. There will be more than two vendors
242 each week and each person can buy three samples from each vendor. If
243 it's a distillery, it's 1/2 an ounce, or 1.5 ounces total.
244 Mr. Papakonstantis said it's more a question of what precedent
245 we're setting for other events.
246 Ms. Belanger said up to two vendors and each could do three
247 samples, so it's 3 ounces total. Mr. Bisson said it's up to two ounces of
248 wine per sample.
249 Ms. Belanger asked how they ID people. Ms. Amsten said they're
250 trained to ID everyone. She added that liquor commission paperwork has
251 to be signed for each vendor. Ms. Roy said Powderkeg has a very formal
252 process for each brewer or distillery.
253 Ms. Cowan asked how many of their other farmer's markets allow
254 sampling. Ms. Amsten said all but one. Ms. Cowan said we should be
255 prudent but not so restrictive that we're not being innovative. Mr.
256 Chartrand said we can trust our vendors and patrons. Mr. Papakonstantis
257 said his problem is with loopholes. Mr. Bisson said any instance of non-
258 compliance would be addressed. Any event organizer would come before
259 the Board for approval. The vendor fee will dissuade people from using it.
260 Ms. Gilman asked who sets the vendor fee. Mr. Bisson said we
261 don't ask anyone what they charge their vendors.

262 Ms. Roy said these suggestions from Chief McCain could be
263 applied to any vendor. Mr. Chartrand said he was assuming they would
264 be. The size limits really limit the intake.

265 Ms. Belanger said there are Police details at the Beer and Chili
266 fest. We should think about adding a Police detail if we sell alcohol. Ms.
267 Roy said that would be an added expense. Mr. Papakonstantis said when
268 we've permitted the Town Hall, is there a Police detail for that? Mr. Bisson
269 said no. Ms. Roy said the Police presence at the Chili Fest is more about
270 the size of the event.

271 MOTION (not voted): Mr. Chartrand moved to approve these guidelines for Farmer's Markets at
272 Swasey Parkway. Ms. Cowan seconded. Mr. Papakonstantis said he would vote nay unless it is
273 more specific. Mr. Chartrand withdrew his motion and Ms. Cowan withdrew her second.

274
275 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize sales and sampling at the Farmer's Market under
276 the following requirements: All vendors must supply a copy of a liquor license and insurance
277 naming the town as the insured before they can participate. These should be kept on file at both
278 the town and with SEL. The liquor license fee the town charges is paid by vendors to participate,
279 \$200 per year per event. Any events outside of the SEL farmers' market would need to pay the
280 fee again. Any other events that qualify as farmers' markets must follow the same policies as
281 SEL applies to its vendors. Limit of no more than 2 vendors per week. Limit the number of
282 samples one person can buy per week to 3 per day per person while following the RSA
283 guidelines on sample sizes. Any instances of noncompliance with the policy will result in the
284 vendor no longer being able to participate in any Exeter markets or events. Ms. Cowan
285 seconded. Ms. Belanger asked if the town should be "co-insured," rather than "insured." Mr.
286 Papakonstantis said he wants to stay with the motion as it is. The motion passed 5-0.

287
288 ii. Parks Improvement Fund – Spray Pad Surfacing – Greg Bisson, Parks &
289 Recreation Director

290 Mr. Bisson said we found several leaks when we opened up the
291 spray pad, which have all been repaired. We did not receive the grant we
292 applied for. We're looking to do a rubber flake that mimics epoxy. We
293 recommend the \$7,226.55 bid from Rubberizeit. The Park Improvement
294 Fund total will be \$6,618.45 after this expenditure.

295 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the Parks and Recreation Department's purchase of
296 10 kits of rubber flakes from Rubberize It for \$7,226.55 and to fund it through the Parks
297 Improvement Fund. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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299 iii. Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant – Greg Bisson, Parks &
300 Recreation Director

301 Mr. Bisson said in 2025 LWCF changed how they want the
302 motions made and registered.

303 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to resolve that Melissa Roy, Interim Town Manager, is duly
304 authorized to enter into agreements and/or amendments on behalf of the Town of Exeter with
305 the State of New Hampshire, acting by and through the Department of Natural and Cultural

306 Resources, for the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant project 33-00763 Recreation Park-
307 II, and is further authorized to execute any documents on behalf of this municipality which may
308 be in her judgement desirable or necessary for the purpose of this resolution. Ms. Cowan
309 seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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c. Town Manager's Report

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i. Ms. Roy attended an internal leadership meeting.

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ii. She attended Nancy Bugbee's funeral services.

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iii. Kathy Croteau of the Planning Office retired.

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iv. Ms. Roy covered the Welfare Department while Pam McElroy attended her son's wedding.

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v. The Exeter Egg Hunt is this Saturday, April 4.

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vi. She thanked the Board for hiring the new Town Manager.

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d. Select Board Committee Reports

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i. Ms. Gilman attended the Energy Committee meeting. There will be a presentation about heat pumps on March 31 from 6:30 - 8 PM at the Library. At the Tax Exemption and Credit Advisory Committee, they talked about whether to change solar exemptions. The 250th commission met; there will be an event on May 9.

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ii. Ms. Belanger attended a Planning Board meeting where they heard an application for 97 Portsmouth Ave, Planning Board case #26-3. They heard an abutter objection letter and the Planning Board voted that the objections raised in the letter had no merit. They formally accepted the application but then tabled it due to a concern by the applicant's attorney about an abutter being properly noticed. It is tabled until the April 23 meeting.

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iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.

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iv. Mr. Chartrand attended a Facilities Advisory meeting. Resident Keith Whitehouse showed up and asked when we would get the styrofoam densifier up and running. We asked him to express those concerns at the Sustainability meeting on Wednesday. Traditionally Mr. Sharples has been the staff person for Facilities, but we may want to have another staff member going forward. Ms. Roy said she would be joining those meetings. She added that Mr. Whitehouse spoke with Director Cronin today and got an update.

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v. Mr. Papakonstantis said he was invited to RiverWoods to talk to a group about local government. It was well-attended and a lot of fun. He had someone reach out to him after the Planning Board meeting. Our Land Use Boards and the Select Board encourage public input. Ms. Belanger said there were people there that wanted to speak, but it wasn't the right time because the matter was tabled.

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vi. Ms. Gilman gave an update on State issues.

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- 350 e. Correspondence
351 i. An email from the CPCNH informing us that Henry Hearndon is their new
352 Director.
353 ii. A legislative update from NHMA.
354 iii. Notice of public hearing regarding the Waste Treatment Plant in Epping.
355

356 10. Review Board Calendar

- 357 a. The next meetings are April 13, April 27, May 4, May 18, June 1, June 15, and
358 June 29.
359

360 11. Non-Public Session

361 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3:II(a). Ms.
362 Cowan seconded. In a roll-call vote, the motion passed 5-0. The meeting entered non-public at
363 8:46 PM.
364

365 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The
366 motion passed 5-0.
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368 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved. Ms. Belanger
369 seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
370

371 12. Adjournment

372 **MOTION:** Mr. Papakonstantis moved to adjourn at 8:57 pm. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion
373 passed 5-0
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376 Respectfully Submitted,
377 Joanna Bartell
378 Recording Secretary
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