

1 Select Board Meeting
2 Monday May 4, 2026
3 6:15 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 6:15 PM.
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12 2. Non-Public Session

13 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(I). Ms.
14 Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0, and the meeting entered non-public
15 at 6:16 PM.
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17 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion
18 passed 5-0.
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20 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved. Ms. Belanger
21 seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
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23 The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.
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26 3. Public Comment

- 27 a. Silas Richards described the "Rec Ready NH" toolkit to the Board. Mr.
28 Papakonstantis said we forwarded this information to the relevant Department
29 Heads.
30

31 4. Proclamations/Recognitions

32 Mr. Papakonstantis read the proclamation for Affordable Housing Week:
33 *Whereas, As people should have access to safe healthy and affordable homes*
34 *within communities that provide opportunity; And*
35 *Whereas, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines*
36 *affordable housing as "housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30*
37 *percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities"; And*
38 *Whereas, The Seacoast region of New Hampshire faces one of the most severe*
39 *housing shortages in the State, with rents and home prices outpacing wages and*
40 *contributing to increased housing insecurity and homelessness; And*
41 *Whereas, Housing instability undermines the ability of young families to stay in*
42 *our communities, creates barriers for older adults wishing to age in place, and*
43 *impacts workforce retention and economic growth across the Seacoast; And*

44 *Whereas, Studies have found that each \$100 increase in median rent results in a*
45 *15 percent increase in homelessness in metro areas and a 39 percent increase*
46 *in homelessness in nearby suburbs and rural areas: And*
47 *Whereas, The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention recognize safe,*
48 *healthy and affordable housing within communities of opportunity as key social*
49 *determinants of health: And*
50 *Whereas. Everyone benefits from affordable housing, including the people who*
51 *reside in these properties, their neighbors, businesses, employers and the*
52 *community as a whole; And*
53 *Whereas, United through the Home for All Coalition, municipalities, organizations*
54 *and residents across the Seacoast are participating in Affordable Housing Week*
55 *to elevate the urgent need for affordable housing solutions and to ensure*
56 *homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring.*
57 *Now, therefore, I, Niko Papakonstantis, Select Board Chair of the Town of*
58 *Exeter, do hereby proclaim and affirm May 11-17, 2026 as Affordable Housing*
59 *Week within the Town of Exeter, NH. All people are hereby called upon to*
60 *commit to actions and policies that expand affordable housing opportunities and*
61 *strengthen community stability for all residents.*

62 Maeve Dolan read information about the inaugural Affordable Housing
63 Week, which was organized by the Home for All Coalition and the Workforce
64 Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast. More information can be found at
65 <https://homeforall-seacoast.org/>.

66 Ms. Belanger said 30% of a person's gross income including utilities. We
67 do have a housing crisis. Ms. Dolan said when we use the term "affordable" or
68 "attainable," that means at every income level, although it's most severe for the
69 lowest-income folks. Ms. Cowan said policy decisions are made in Concord, so
70 people must vote in the midterms. Mr. Chartrand said increasing the housing
71 stock as a whole is critical. The mixed-use neighborhood development policy that
72 the Town adopted is important. More supply will lead to better pricing.

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74 5. Approval of Minutes

- 75 a. There were no minutes considered at this meeting.
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77 6. Appointments

- 78 a. Budget Recommendations Committee – Geoffrey Bell

79 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Geoffrey Bell to the Budget Recommendations
80 Committee. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- 81
82 b. Rockingham Planning Commission Member Re-Appointments

83 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Langdon Plumer to the Rockingham Planning
84 Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2030. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
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86 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Gwen English to the Rockingham Planning
87 Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2030. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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89 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to reappoint Marty Kennedy to the Rockingham Planning
90 Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2029. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
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- 92 c. Trustees of the Robinson Trust Funds – Request for New Member Position
93 Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board will conduct an interview with the
94 nominee, and could appoint them.
95

96 7. Discussion/Action Items

- 97 a. Complete Streets Policy Approval

98 Town Planner Dave Sharples was present via Zoom to discuss the
99 Complete Streets policy. Mr. Sharples said at the meeting a week ago, he went
100 over the policy. There is a Select Board policy that the Board can't take action on
101 the first night an issue is discussed. Mr. Papakonstantis said this policy would be
102 effective seven days from tonight.

103 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adopt the Town of Exeter policy #2026-02 Complete Streets,
104 to go into effect as of May 11, 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.
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- 106 b. Epping Waste/Transfer Facility Update

107 Conservation and Sustainability Planner Kristen Murphy was present for
108 this discussion item. Ms. Murphy said the Board previously submitted a letter of
109 concern regarding this project in Epping at 270 Exeter Road. She attended the
110 public hearing, and many of the concerns still stand. She has drafted a letter that
111 focuses on the impact to Great Bay. She's looking for a vote to submit this on the
112 Board's behalf.

113 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize submittal of a letter regarding the permit application
114 for solid waste transfer facility resource waste services in Epping NH, submitted to the New
115 Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Solid Waste Management Bureau, written on
116 behalf of the Board and signed by the Select Board Chair. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion
117 passed 5-0.
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119 Ms. Murphy said we're not opposed to these solid waste facilities in
120 general, but this is sited adjacent to a stream in the Great Bay Watershed. It's a
121 good use in a bad location.
122

- 123 c. Drought Update

124 Public Works Director Stephen Cronin and Water/Sewer Director Steve
125 Dalton were present for this discussion item. Mr. Cronin said we've been
126 monitoring drought conditions and although there's been some recent
127 improvement, much of the State remains in a moderate to severe drought.
128 Groundwater levels remain a particular concern. There's no strong indication of
129 prolonged rainfall heading into the summer. The next couple of weeks will be
130 important going into the summer. We're not recommending any changes to water
131 restrictions at this time. We have some critical water maintenance activities that

132 need to be done, such as the seasonal flushing program and maintenance on the
133 Epping Road tank, which has been offline for the last month or so.

134 Mr. Chartrand said he's glad they've decided not to lower the drought
135 level. There's an extreme deficit in soil moisture. He asked them to review what
136 the Level 4 restrictions are. Mr. Dalton said absolutely no outside watering or
137 washing of vehicles. They allow hand-watering of vegetables only. Commercial
138 car washes and other commercial uses of water are still allowed.

139 Ms. Belanger asked if the signboards could be put out, and Mr. Cronin
140 said yes.

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142 d. Energy Cost Comparison Q1 2026 v. 2025

143 Finance Director Corey Stevens was present for this discussion item. Mr.
144 Stevens said he looked at electricity, natural gas, and fuel. Electricity through Q1
145 compared to last year is up 46% or \$75,000 over the prior year. While our
146 consumption rate has been level, the cost has gone up. There has been some
147 change in use of buildings; 32 Court has become idle and 10 Hampton Road has
148 gone online. Natural gas rates have been relatively flat over the last year. It was
149 a cold winter so consumption went up. Clearing the streets of snow used a fair
150 amount of fuel. Rates for diesel and gas have improved over last year's
151 contracts. He presented a building-by-building breakdown of costs.

152 Ms. Belanger asked if the solar panels are helping at all. Mr. Stevens said
153 it's not reflecting in the results here. We're generating revenue from the solar
154 array in net metering or selling renewable energy credits. Ms. Belanger asked
155 about the solar panels at the DPW Complex. Mr. Dalton said he can get that
156 information. He added that our electric supply contract was signed last year and
157 is good through November 2027.

158 Mr. Stevens said he has a draft of the tax return where we will file for the
159 solar return credit of about \$1M. Mr. Chartrand asked if that's annual or one-time,
160 and Mr. Stevens said it's one-time.

161 Ms. Roy said regarding 10 Hampton Road, the CDFA grant was to
162 electrify the building and add electric heat and air conditioning. We do expect
163 their electricity to be more. The building is bustling all the time. They're using it a
164 lot more than 32 Court Street.

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166 8. Regular Business

167 a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

168 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 110/2/119 in the amount of
169 \$190.00 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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171 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 110/2/117 in the amount of
172 \$222.00 for tax year 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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174 b. Permits & Approvals

175 i. There were no permits or approvals considered at this meeting.

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- c. Town Manager's Report
 - i. Ms. Roy said the Board received a question from a resident on Westside Drive who felt that their furnace had been affected by the construction. The Contractor is taking care of that.
 - ii. We received some public comment regarding 11 Chestnut Street; we have been working with Legal to address the resident's question.
 - iii. We received the Rec Ready information from Mr. Richards and we're having various Department Heads review that.
 - iv. The Town had a structure fire an hour or two ago on Robin Hood Drive. The fire is under control, but our Department was already out on multiple calls so we depended on mutual aid.

- d. Select Board Committee Reports
 - i. Ms. Gilman had no report. She gave an update on State issues.
 - ii. Ms. Belanger had no report.
 - iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
 - iv. Mr. Chartrand had no report.
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis had no report.

- e. Correspondence
 - i. An email to the Board
 - ii. The communication from a resident on Westside Drive
 - iii. The NHMA Bulletin
 - iv. A flyer for the Alewife Festival this Saturday. Mr. Papakonstantis also mentioned that May 16 from 11-2 at Swasey Parkway is the birch tree's birthday celebration.

- 9. Review Board Calendar
 - a. There is a special meeting May 14 at 8:15 AM. The next regular meetings are May 18, June 1, June 15, June 29, July 13, July 27, August 10, and August 24.

- 10. Non-Public Session
 - a. There was no non-public session at this time.

11. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary

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