

1 Select Board Meeting  
2 Monday June 29, 2026  
3 6:30 PM  
4 Nowak Room, Town Offices  
5 Draft 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 Town Manager Paul Cohen were present at this meeting.  
10

11 The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:30 PM. The Board went  
12 downstairs to the Wheelwright Room for interviews.  
13

14 2. Board Interviews

- 15 a. Ethan Fishbaugh for the Conservation Commission
  - 16 b. Ryan Kelly for the Planning Board
  - 17 c. Dan Provost for the Trustees of the Robinson Fund
- 18

19 The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.  
20

21 3. Police Department - Swearing In

- 22 a. Chief Josh McCain introduced Christopher Dowd, and Town Clerk Jen Shupe  
23 swore him in as an Officer.  
24

25 4. Proclamations/Recognitions

- 26 a. Daughters of the American Revolution – First Place National Video Contest  
27 Mr. Papakonstantis recognized the Exeter Chapter of the DAR, which  
28 placed first place in a National video contest.  
29

30 5. Public Comment

- 31 a. Mark Furlong of 20 Forrest Street said he has a suggestion for an addition to the  
32 agenda: the Board should mention items scheduled for the next meeting. Mr.  
33 Furlong also said he appreciates the effort to get the Park Street Bridge meeting  
34 on the agenda. He's part of a neighborhood group with 30 members which has  
35 appointed a liaison to the Town. The liaison person has already met with Mr.  
36 Papakonstantis. The group plans to present the Board with a petition regarding  
37 the bridge at the next meeting.

38 Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board plans to offer an update on July 13.  
39 He will continue to meet either with the liaison or the group as appropriate.

- 40 b. Keith Whitehouse of Westside Drive said he is a member of the Conservation  
41 Commission, but he is speaking for himself. He has concerns about the proposed  
42 auto dealership on Portsmouth Avenue. There's a proposed retaining wall that's  
43 23 feet high, which he demonstrated with a tape measure. He said it will require  
44 hundreds of truckloads to fill that area. Usually you can tell if there's been

45 flooding by the trash, and the trash has come up pretty high in this area. It's  
46 wetlands. He's not sure why we'd allow this to happen when the Conservation  
47 Commission is opposed.

48 c. Megan Ramundo of 71 Park Street said she's very concerned about the train  
49 bridge. To get to the meeting, she and her family had to go around the train  
50 bridge, which added time to our bike ride. The neighborhood is connected to that  
51 bridge. She doesn't want dangerous material to be shipped on the train, or a  
52 double-decker train running there. There's no public listing for how many freight  
53 trains come through this town, although you can buy it from the corporations. She  
54 cringes every time she hears a horn go by. It is a safety issue. We're cut off from  
55 the Hospital. She doesn't want to walk down Route 27 and cross the railroad  
56 tracks to get her kids to school. She doesn't want Exeter to look like Bergen  
57 County and have hazardous waste going through.

58

## 59 6. Appointments

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

61

## 62 7. Discussion/Action Items

### 63 a. Water/Sewer Rates Discussion

64 Finance Director Corey Stevens said we're considering a Water/Sewer  
65 rate increase. For the last year, we've been monitoring the Water/Sewer Fund to  
66 decide how to set our rates. We've known that a new surface water treatment  
67 plant may be in the offing in the next 4-5 years. Mr. Cronin is working with our  
68 vendor to suss that out, so we need to look at our rates and our operating  
69 budget. We did a \$50M Wastewater Treatment Plant several years ago, and  
70 we're at that point with Water. The plant may be \$40M and needs to be built in  
71 the early 2030's. We want to prepare for that now, rather than putting through a  
72 big rate increase later. On the Sewer side, we have \$18M in projected State Aid  
73 grants, but there is no guarantee of that. The next State budget is in 2027. If that  
74 grant were to go away, that would be a hole in our operating budget. We did  
75 some modeling and put together a 6-year forecast showing expenses and  
76 revenue at various increase levels. We have a Water Fund balance that is  
77 healthy. On the Sewer side, it's about keeping rates moving forward in tandem  
78 with what we expect for budget increases.

79 Mr. Stevens said he shared this presentation with the Water/Sewer  
80 Committee and they agreed to the proposal for 2026, but wanted to see what  
81 happens in 2027. The fund balance as a percentage of revenue is higher than  
82 40%, but we're planning for a Water Treatment Plant and that the State Aid grant  
83 may not always be there. In Sewer, we are planning to use fund balance when  
84 we tackle the High Street Cross-Country Line in 2029 or 2030.

85 Mr. Chartrand asked when we did the latest rate study. Mr. Stevens said  
86 Underwood did it in 2023, and we implemented the first of their rate increases in  
87 2024. We didn't make increases in 2025. Mr. Chartrand said the idea of slow  
88 steady rate increases is in line with that rate study. Mr. Stevens said it's in line on

89 the Sewer side. He doesn't believe we had the Surface Water Treatment Plant in  
90 mind when they did the 2023 study. Mr. Chartrand said it was probably in the  
91 background somewhere. Mr. Stevens said the increases they were modeling  
92 don't include the double-digit increases we're looking at.

93 Ms. Belanger asked if we have to reapply for the State Aid Grant. Mr.  
94 Stevens said no, we had a commitment of \$18M when the project started. It just  
95 renews as part of the biennial budget of the State. As far as we know, we will  
96 continue to receive \$1M a year.

97 Ms. Belanger said she appreciates the gradual rate increases.

98 Mr. Stevens said we're recommending just the 2026 rate increases. The  
99 rates would be effective July 1, so the first district that gets billed in October  
100 would be the first to realize these new rates. Mr. Papakonstantis said the  
101 Water/Sewer Advisory committee recommended unanimously to bring these  
102 rates to the Select Board. Mr. Chartrand said there was one individual in  
103 attendance who felt very wary, but he feels that if we commissioned a study we'd  
104 be fools not to take their advice.

105 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjust the Water usage fee by an increase of 6% effective  
106 July 1, 2026. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

108 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjust the quarterly Water service fees by an increase of 23%  
109 effective July 1, 2026. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

111 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjust the quarterly Sewer service fees by an increase of 12%  
112 effective July 1, 2026. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

114 b. Budget v. Actual Results (Unaudited) at 12/31/25 compared to 12/31/24

115 Mr. Stevens said he gives this update once a year. Going forward he will  
116 try to put a presentation together monthly as well. Regarding revenues and  
117 expenses, our revenues are fairly stable and we're meeting expectations. In our  
118 General Expense lines, in everything other than labor, we do a pretty good job of  
119 budgeting. We continue to see surpluses on the expense side due to our labor  
120 "savings" because of staff vacancies. In 2025, we billed just over \$68M in  
121 property tax bills, an increase of \$3.8M over the previous year. At the end of the  
122 year, we had collected 97% of that billing. Of the \$68M, 70% or \$47M went to  
123 schools; \$2.2M went to the county; \$3M was retained by the TIF; and the Town  
124 received \$15.5M in 2025 from property tax revenue. The General Fund also gets  
125 income from Motor Vehicles, Meals and Rooms, and building permits; that  
126 revenue was \$8.2M, which was an increase of \$500,000 over the prior year.  
127 Motor Vehicles was at \$3.7M, an increase of \$161,000 or 5%. Building Permits  
128 were at \$707,000 in 2025, a significant increase over the prior year. The  
129 Academy is doing a renovation on Academy Hall which was permitted at  
130 \$375,000. Meals and Rooms was \$1.6M, a modest increase of \$34,000. Our  
131 revenue from Departments was \$1.1M in 2025, about \$52,000 more than the  
132 prior year; this includes Police Detail, reimbursements, and solid waste fees at

133 DPW. We had a decline in interest income, which totaled \$564,000 in 2025,  
134 because Interest rates lowered a tad in 2025 and we moved some money  
135 around. The EMS Fund turned back \$300,000 to the General Fund; it was  
136 \$260,000. The Sick Leave Trust Fund paid out \$158,000 for buyouts when  
137 people retired. We used \$650,000 of Fund Balance to set the tax rate in 2025.  
138 We had \$25.4M in General Fund revenue, a surplus over budget of \$750,000.

139 General Fund expenses were \$23.7M, or 96% spent. This is consistent  
140 with 2024, when we spent 97% of the budget. Personnel costs make up 70% of  
141 the General Fund budget. Personnel "savings" was \$900,000 in 2025. General  
142 Government was 6% of the General Fund at \$1.5M or 97% of budget spent. We  
143 were looking for a Human Resources Director for much of 2025, which led to a  
144 savings. Mr. Chartrand suggested that instead of a savings, it's "money  
145 accumulated but opportunity lost." Mr. Stevens said the Town Manager's  
146 Department was under budget at 95%. Finance was 5% of the overall budget,  
147 and had total spending of \$1.2M or 97% of budget spent. IT came in lower;  
148 they've been searching for a new IT assistant, which saved \$43,000 between  
149 wage and benefits. Planning and Building spent just under \$750,000, or 94% of  
150 budget. In Public Safety, the Police and Fire Departments are 19% of the budget  
151 each. Police were at \$4.6M, or 95% of budget spent. There were some staffing  
152 shortages in Patrol, and it was \$94,000 under budget. They had three openings  
153 at year-end but the Chief has appointed two Officers this year. Fire was \$4.5M  
154 spent, or 98%. There were some savings in the suppression division. Public  
155 Works is 24% of the budget. The total spend was \$5.8M, or 92% of budget. We  
156 had heavy snow at the beginning and end of 2025. There was \$474,000 spent in  
157 the snow budget, \$185,000 over budget. Despite the overage, we decided not to  
158 tap into the Snow and Ice Deficit Fund, given the surplus in the Operating Fund  
159 budget. The Snow and Ice Fund has \$276,000 in it presently. In Public Works  
160 Administration, budget spent was 67%. Both Engineering positions are vacant.  
161 Streetlight costs were \$30,000 under budget. We continue to see positive gains  
162 from our investment in new streetlights. The garage was at 49% of budget spent;  
163 they went from two down to one staff member but now are fully staffed at three.

164 In Welfare, the total spent was \$183,000, which was slightly over budget.  
165 The greatest demand is housing and shelter costs, which were \$37,000 over  
166 budget. We have partners in the community that make contributions, so Welfare  
167 ended in a positive position

168 Debt Service was at \$1.9M for the year. This was down \$111,000 due to  
169 retiring debt during the year. Capital Outlay was at \$314,000, or 88% of budget,  
170 which accounts for purchases of vehicles and equipment. In Payroll Benefits and  
171 Taxes, \$158,000 was spent for sick leave buyouts.

172 The Unassigned Fund Balance was about \$6.6M - we are going through  
173 an audit right now. It was \$5.99M in the prior year, about \$600,000 less. That  
174 puts us at 8%; the DRA's recommended percentage is between 5% and 17%.

175 Ms. Belanger said regarding snow removal, we might want to look at the  
176 bottom line number this year. People with limited eyesight are having issues

177 moving through downtown. We clear our sidewalks but when the plow goes  
178 through again they can't navigate. Mr. Chartrand said interim Town Manager  
179 Melissa Roy really heard what we said in the ADA input session and followed  
180 through with DPW. There were resources allocated to do a better job downtown.

181 Ms. Belanger asked about expenditures from the ADA Fund. Mr. Stevens  
182 said we allocated funds to the Library for an adult changing table, that was the  
183 last project.

184 Water Fund Revenue was \$5.1M, an increase of \$170,000 or 3% over the  
185 prior year. 2024 was the first year we did the rate increase. 310M gallons of  
186 water were used in 2025, compared to 306M gallons in 2024, a 4M increase. Our  
187 largest revenue source is water rates; water consumption charges were \$4M.  
188 Impact fees increased to \$88,000. Hydrant Maintenance increased to \$130,000;  
189 this is the contribution the General Fund makes to Water. Expenses were \$4.2M,  
190 or 90% of budget. It was \$474,000 under budget. Labor savings were \$200,000.  
191 Distribution, which typically runs with eight staff, had two open positions;  
192 Treatment, which typically has five staff, had three. There were savings in  
193 Chemical Supplies, Utilities, and Consulting Services. \$135,000 of the unspent  
194 money was encumbered at year end. The Water Fund had \$946,000 in net  
195 income. Fund Balance was \$3.7M at the end of the year.

196 Sewer Fund revenue was \$9M, up \$284,000 or 3% from the prior year.  
197 \$180,000 of that increase was Operations and \$121,000 was our use of bond  
198 proceeds from projects which came in under budget. This was offset by a  
199 \$16,000 decrease in the State Aid Grant, at \$1M. There were \$6.9M in rate  
200 charges. The Septage Receiving program came back online at the end of 2025,  
201 with \$41,000 in income. Expenses were \$7.7M, which was \$503,000 under  
202 budget. There were \$360,000 in labor savings: two down in collections, two down  
203 in treatment for most of the year. We enlisted the help of an outside contractor on  
204 a part-time basis, which offset the surplus. Debt Service increased to \$4.6M, a  
205 \$426,000 increase over the prior year. 2025 was the first year paying on the  
206 Sewer Siphon project. The Sewer Fund had \$1.3M in net income. The Fund  
207 Balance was \$6.7M at year end.

208 In Revolving Funds, Cable saw a decline in Franchise Fee revenues,  
209 which is consistent with national trends. In 2021 we had \$296,000; that dropped  
210 to \$232,000 last year. We split that 50/50 between Cable and the General Fund.  
211 CATV's allocation of that franchise fee was \$116,000. At the end of the year, we  
212 made the decision to allocate an additional \$46,000 from the General Fund to the  
213 Cable Fund. They ended in a \$40,000 deficit. The \$171,000 fund balance was  
214 reduced to \$131,000 at the end of 2025. The goal of that fund is to cover major  
215 expenses for equipment.

216 The Rec Revolving Fund had an increase of \$126,000 over 2024. There  
217 were increases in programming and Impact Fees. We've been able to tap into  
218 grant revenue from the Hospital and Riverwoods for Seniors. Expenses went up  
219 for programming and staffing. Capital Outlay is below operating results because  
220 of the investment the Fund made in 10 Hampton Road in 2025. The Rec

221 Revolving Fund contributed \$235,000 to the project. \$125,000 from Fund  
222 Balance, \$900,000 from a grant, \$110,000 in impact fees. The Rec Revolving  
223 Fund balance was at \$183,000 at end of year.

224 Regarding the EMS Fund, the department responded to 2,731 calls in  
225 2025, up by 336 from 2024. Revenue increased to \$962,000. Cost increased,  
226 labor rose by \$51,000, and operating expenses increased \$25,000. The EMS  
227 Fund contributed \$150,000 towards a new communications console for the new  
228 Public Safety complex.

229 The General Fund had a \$6.6M Fund Balance; the Water Fund was  
230 \$3.7M; and the Sewer Fund was \$6.7M. The funds are strong. We need to keep  
231 working on our labor challenges.

232 Ms. Belanger asked staff to follow up with DPW Director Cronin about  
233 whether the leak discovered caused some of the large increase in the water  
234 usage. Mr. Chartrand said there's growth but also increasing conservation. He  
235 added that 4M out of 310M is not a big number.  
236

237 8. Approval of Minutes

238 a. June 15, 2026

239 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of June 15, 2026 as presented. Ms.  
240 Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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242 b. June 22, 2026 Goal Setting Meeting

243 Corrections: Mr. Chartrand said on the final page, he would like to change the  
244 wording under item 2, on budgetary constraints for FY27. There's a bullet point  
245 "Dan Chartrand doesn't feel that we should limit the FY27 budget." It should read  
246 "Dan Chartrand feels that we should not reflexively limit the '27 budget to the  
247 detriment of our ongoing critical priorities.

248 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of June 22, 2026 as amended . Ms.  
249 Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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251 9. Appointments

252 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Megan Spencer to the Exeter Housing Authority, term  
253 to expire in 2028. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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255 **MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to appoint Ethan Fishbaugh as an alternate member of the  
256 Conservation Commission, term to expire April 2029. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion  
257 passed 5-0.

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259 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Ryan Kelly as an alternate to the Planning Board,  
260 term to expire April 2027. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

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262 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Dan Provost to the open voting position on the  
263 Trustees of the Robinson Fund, term to expire April 2029. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion  
264 passed 5-0.

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10. Town Manager's Report

- a. Master Patrol Officer Designation - Mr. Cohen announced that the Chief completed the Master Patrol Officer designation selection: Detective Bailey Teixeira, Detective Michael O'Connor, Officer Michael Ingenito, and Officer John Suglia.
- b. New Town Offices Hours Open to the Public - The Town Offices have new hours as of next week: they're open Tuesday evening until 7 and close Friday at 12:30.
- c. Assessing Office Coverage - With the retirement of Janet Whitten, we've been advertising to secure a replacement but do not have one, so we'll be contracting with MRI for that service on Tuesdays and Thursdays 8-4.
- d. The Planning Board will hold a hearing July 9 at 7 PM for the application of a 14 lot residential cluster subdivision at Exeter Country Club driving range. Mr. Chartrand said we were in conversation with them about the Conservation Easement, did they reach out to us again? Mr. Cohen said we have to secure the agreement, he'll try to get that in front of the Board.
- e. In Public health, over the weekend there was a positive Jamestown Canyon virus mosquito in Exeter. The State does not consider this a significant health event at this time.
- f. Notification from NH DES that they approved with conditions a waste collection, storage, and transfer facility in Epping located at 270 Exeter Road. Mr. Chartrand said NH DES forced us to build the wastewater treatment plant but now approved this project in the same watershed.
- g. HB 340 pertains to electioneering by public employees. The concern is that this may expose public employees to liability when they are trying to provide information and discussion to the community. We think this will detract from information that should be provided to the public. Mr. Papakonstantis said he wants to authorize a letter to the Governor.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to send a letter opposing HB 340 to Governor Ayotte and authorize the Chair of the Select Board to sign that letter. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

11. Select Board Committee Reports

- a. Ms. Gilman said the 250th celebrations are beginning. There is a calendar online with upcoming events. The Historic District Commission approved a building at Front and Center Street. It will be a 5-unit residential property. The applicants worked with the HDC well.
- b. Ms. Belanger attended the Planning Board, where there was a request for minor site plan parking waiver at 73 Winter Street. The Church has a parking agreement with Shooters. That was approved with conditions. An application from Phillips Exeter was tabled because the ZBA granted a rehearing. An application for Pine Crest Mobile Home park was approved for a building and driveway to store maintenance equipment on site. Two members of the public were there in support. There was an application for Stone Arch development, a

- 309 proposed cul de sac off Brentwood Road. There's a sitewalk 5 Brentwood Road  
310 tentatively scheduled for July 14 at 5 PM.  
311 c. Ms. Cowan had no report.  
312 d. Mr. Chartrand attended the Facilities Advisory Committee, along with Mr. Cohen.  
313 There was discussion and an update on the new Public Safety building. We  
314 discussed the Facilities Assessment work. Mr. Chartrand mentioned that a tree  
315 was taken out on Water Street by a car, and there's already a new tree there; he  
316 thanked Jay Perkins.  
317 e. Mr. Papakonstantis attended a Swasey Park Trustees meeting, which was just a  
318 short routine meeting. July 11 is the annual festival at the Independence Center.  
319 Admission is free. Ms. Gilman said there will be a kids all-wheels parade with  
320 decorations at the YMCA.

321  
322 12. Correspondence

- 323 a. An email thanking the Board for the CSX presentation  
324 b. A presentation from Ms. Richards from the same evening  
325 c. An email from CPCNH regarding utility supply rates  
326 d. A communication from COAST  
327 e. The NHMA Legislative Bulletin  
328

329 13. Review Board Calendar

- 330 a. The next meetings are July 13, July 27, Aug 10, Aug 24, September 14, and  
331 September 28. September 1 is a placeholder if an additional meeting is needed.  
332 b. Ms. Belanger said the Planning Board CIP meeting Aug 13 is the start of the  
333 budget process.  
334

335 14. Non-Public Session

336 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under 91A3:II(a). Ms. Cowan  
337 seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0 and the meeting went into non-public at 8:43  
338 PM.

339  
340 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to exit non-public session at 9:17 PM. Ms. Cowan seconded.  
341 The motion passed 5-0.  
342

343 15. Adjournment

344 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM. Ms. Cowan seconded. The  
345 motion passed 5-0.  
346

347 Respectfully Submitted,  
348 Joanna Bartell  
349 Recording Secretary  
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