

Select Board Meeting
Monday August 10, 2026
6:15 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Draft Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Nancy Belanger, Dan Chartrand

Members absent: Julie Gilman

Town Manager Paul Cohen and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were also present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:15 PM.

2. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(I). Mr. Chartrand seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0. The meeting entered non-public at 6:16 PM.

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.

3. Public Comment

- a. Mark Furlong of 20 Forrest Street said HB 1300 is one of the strangest pieces of legislation to come out of Concord in many years. Tax caps don't work. They've been adopted in many towns and they override them all the time. The only good part is that the bill sunsets in 2032. We're voting on a local issue in the general election where we vote for statewide and national issues, and we have no forum prior to that vote to discuss it. He would like the Select Board to work with the local School Boards to have a public forum in October on what a tax cap would mean. Also, regarding the security of the public water supply, he's seen stories lately about it. He's never heard any discussion of security and cybersecurity. He doesn't need the details but he would like to hear that it's being addressed.
- b. Public Works Director Cronin, who was present at the meeting, said we received a grant to separate our water and wastewater facilities from the town's network, which we have done. We have the hardware and software in place to monitor our water and wastewater assets. We're aware of attempts that have been made elsewhere. We continue to look for any vulnerabilities. He feels we're well protected, but it's a rapidly evolving environment.
- c. Keith Whitehouse of Westside Drive [wearing a cow placard] said he would like to promote "Art in the Barn" at Raynes Farm on September 25. Residents can pick up canvas from Kristin Murphy and submit in any medium. He added that it has been 955 days that Pairpoint Park has not been open.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

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

5. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Park Street Bridge Update - Mark Furlong, Exeter Resident and Stephen Cronin, Public Works Director

Mr. Furlong said we submitted a nomination to the NH Preservation Alliance "Seven to Save" program for the Park Street Bridge. This would raise awareness but would not come with any funding. The public information on the website made the application possible. We can amend our application to include support from the Select Board if they are willing. A vote followed up by a letter.

Mr. Chartrand said he would support a letter or other means of supporting this effort.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to support the Seven to Save nomination for the Park Street Bridge and authorize the Board to submit a letter of support to the group for submission for the nomination. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Cronin said regarding the Park Street Bridge, we've been working with Wright-Pierce Engineering on next steps. There would be a study to document existing conditions and constraints and identify alternatives. Town Counsel has been in touch with DOT. We're trying to get clarification if a qualifications-based process would be needed for funding purposes. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if he will meet with DOT this month, and Mr. Cronin said yes. Mr. Papakonstantis asked for an update on September 14.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment.

Sally Ward of 72 Park Street asked about the timeframe for this work. Mr. Cronin said it depends on if we have to go through a qualifications-based process. We may need to put together an RFP and open this to other consulting firms. Ms. Ward said CSX has said they're concerned about safety and the bridge collapsing. What would it take to shore up the bridge so it would not collapse if it were a pedestrian and emergency bridge only? Our preference as a neighborhood group is to open it to vehicular traffic, but if it could be fixed for pedestrians, does that mean it does not need to be taken down? Would the height standard no longer be an issue?

Mark Furlong of Forest Street said the document Wright-Pierce created is very comprehensive. He appreciates the public input aspect that's in the plans. Regarding EMS, he thinks we will only be discussing EMS with Exeter, but at least four other towns come through Exeter to get to the Hospital.

Terrie Harmon of 6 Oak Street asked if Park Street is a class 5 road, what would happen if it is discontinued? There's a potential legal issue.

Ms. Belanger asked what "SHPO" is in the document. Mr. Furlong said it's the State Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Cronin said we haven't been able to find the original engineering study from the early 2000s, but it would be a dated study and we should probably look at it again comprehensively anyway.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the neighborhood submitted a working document for collaboration purposes. He is committed to continuing to meet with the resident group.

- b. Pine/Linden/ Front Street Roundabout Update - Stephen Cronin, Public Works Director

Mr. Cronin said roundabout construction started last Thursday with the implementation of the detour. It's well-signed and traffic seems to be flowing well. On Thursday they milled the existing surface and laid out the intersection. On Friday, Consolidated and the Fire Dept moved the utilities, and Unutil came out today to remove unused utility poles. They're installing the granite curb this week.

- c. Highway Block Grant - Stephen Cronin, Public Works Director

Mr. Cronin said we heard from NH DOT with an estimate for Highway Block Grant Aid. They estimate that we'll receive \$325,564.99: \$289,246.57 in aid and \$36,318[.42] in additional highway funding from SB 367. This is calculated based on population and mileage of class 4 and 5 roads. Construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of those roads. The aid will be distributed in four payments. Any changes to the total would be reflected in the April 2027 payment.

- d. ADA Funding Request - Melissa Roy, Assistant Town Manager

Ms. Roy said the ADA group, which is herself, Parks and Rec Assistant Director David Tovey, Town Inspector Doug Eastman, and resident Amanda Kelly, have been reviewing ADA needs in town. We have a report called the DAX Track report with multiple ADA items. We spent the last year looking at recommendations. The last project funded was the Library's ADA universal changing table. We're recommending three projects, including handrail installation at the public restroom ramp. Due to a miscommunication with maintenance, it has already been installed. We're looking for approval for \$3,000 from the ADA fund for that project.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appropriate \$13,821 from the ADA capital reserve fund for the following three projects: handrail installation at the public restroom entrance ramp for \$3,000; the Town Offices automatic door operator push plates for \$3,735; and the park pathway accessibility improvement for \$7,086. Ms. Cowan seconded. Ms. Roy asked if the Board would like her to speak to the other projects, but Mr. Papakonstantis said the memo in the packet was very thorough. Ms. Belanger asked how much is left in the fund, and Ms. Roy said \$80,000. The motion passed 4-0.

- e. NHMA Town Voting Delegate Decision

Mr. Cohen said this is the opening of registration period for the conference. By default, the representative is the Chair of the Select Board.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved that the Chair of the Select Board represent the Board at the NHMA conference. Ms. Belanger seconded. Ms. Cowan said she's nervous about what they're doing so she wanted oversight, but she trusts Mr. Papakonstantis to do it. The motion passed 4-0.

f. National Night Out

Mr. Papakonstantis recognized the Exeter PD for a successful National Night Out, particularly Detective Bruce Page who organized it. It was very well-attended. Mr. Chartrand said the new space in Town House Common is a perfect fit for the event.

6. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: July 27, 2026

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of July 27, 2026 as presented. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

7. Appointments

a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

8. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the notice of intent to cut for Tax Map 40 Lot 15. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

9. Town Manager's Report

- a. Mr. Cohen said regarding the capital improvement program, a draft is complete and was submitted to the Planning Board for Thursday. This is the starting point of the five-year plan for the community. He attended the BRC meeting virtually.
- b. Mr. Cohen said we have initiated a social media policy where we are disabling comments on posts from town-operated social media accounts. We don't have the resources to monitor and respond to comments on those sites. There are also public record implications. This will also protect town employees from abusive or threatening comments. Mr. Chartrand said that is appropriate. We seek out other ways to engage the public and be transparent.
- c. Ms. Belanger asked Mr. Cohen to look into the idea of a co-meeting with the School Board. She doesn't know if that is allowed under the new statute. Mr. Cohen said we welcome guidance from New Hampshire or NHMA on what is allowed. Ms. Cowan said the legislature allows for a public meeting to be held. Mr. Papakonstantis asked Mr. Cohen to look into that and get back to Mr. Furlong. Mr. Papakonstantis asked to discuss it again at the August 24 meeting.

10. Select Board Committee Reports

- a. Ms. Belanger thanked the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager for attending the charette meetings, which she was unable to attend. She attended the first BRC meeting.
- b. Mr. Chartrand said the Train Station Committee had a pre-charette planning meeting. He also attended the BRC kickoff meeting. He participated with Mr. Whitehouse in styrofoam recycling. He attended every charrette event and was impressed with how many people turned out. Train Station Committee Chair John Ring and Darren Winham went above and beyond in pulling off the event.
- c. Mr. Papakonstantis attended BRC and National Night Out.
- d. Ms. Cowan had no report.

11. Permits & Approvals

- a. There were no permits or approvals discussed.

12. Correspondence

- a. An email from a resident about e-bike safety. Mr. Cohen said Police Chief McCain is working to “educate and enforce.”
- b. The letters sent to State Delegates. Mr. Papakonstantis said we also sent letters to Representatives Pappas and Goodlander, as well as Senators Shaheen and Hassen, but they did not make it into the packet.
- c. A letter from our auditor
- d. A handwritten note from a resident. Mr. Chartrand said it’s in regards to the pedestrian closing of Swasey Parkway. They want to access by vehicle from the closer end to downtown.
- e. A notice from NHMA on the lithium ion battery disposal ban

13. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meetings are August 24, September 14, September 28, Tuesday October 13, October 26, November 9, November 23, December 7, and December 21. The primary is September 8 and the general election is November 3.

14. Non-Public Session

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

15. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary