

Select Board Meeting
Monday August 24, 2026
5:45 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Draft Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Nancy Belanger, Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, Town Manager Paul Cohen, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 5:45 PM.

2. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3:II(I). Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0 and the meeting entered non-public at 5:45 PM.

3. Board Interviews

- a. Russ Harland – Budget Recommendations Committee (no term)
- b. Caryl Olmstead - Budget Recommendations Committee (no term)
- c. Communications Advisory Committee – Silas Richards (4/28; 4/29; Alt 4/29)
- d. Anthony Zwaan – Budget Recommendations Committee (no term)
- e. Benjamin Hodsdon – Housing Advisory Committee (4/28; 4/29)

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.

4. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Mr. Papakonstantis said we will be conducting a service near the public safety building on the morning of September 11th, ending with a moment of silence.

6. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Parks & Recreation – After School Program – David Tovey, Parks & Recreations Assistant Director & Caroline Neel, Recreation Coordinator

Ms. Neel said we're launching an afterschool program at the community center for students in K-5. It starts on Monday. We will be hiring a full-time Afterschool Program coordinator who will also be supporting youth programs. This will be 60% funded from afterschool program revenue, 30% through summer camp revenue, and 10% from youth sports program revenue, with zero impact on the General Fund. There will be some part-time staff supporting that program. We're also starting a "Kids' Night Out" evening program once a month and a "School's Out" program on days when Exeter Public Schools will not be in

session, starting on September 8. Mr. Tovey said these programs are able to sustain themselves. 71 out of 140 spots are filled.

Ms. Cowan asked how the costs compare to other afterschool programs. Ms. Neel said it's about the same as market value. We have to pay for transportation, as the school system is unable to provide buses to the Rec Center. Ms. Cowan asked why they can't provide the bussing. Ms. Neel said the route is full, but we may have an opportunity to use their system starting in October.

Mr. Chartrand thanked the department for their work and creativity to provide something that the town needs. Providing it from the Rec Revolving Fund shows creativity.

Ms. Belanger said the program costs \$35 per day per child. Can we try to bring that down a little in the future? That might be tough for some people. She also asked what staff we have for this program. Ms. Neel said we need the Afterschool Program Coordinator, who does the logistics and planning, and a youth program lead facilitating the activities, as well as one or two support staff. We do a 1:10 staff to student ratio, so the number of staff depends on how many kids we have each day.

b. Parks & Recreation Department – Exeter Hospital Grant – David Tovey, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director

Mr. Tovey said this is the Exeter Hospital grant, which we have received two years in a row. Instead of doing it year-by-year, they'd like to do a three-year plan. They will give us \$30,000 annually for the next three years for senior programming, \$90,000 total. The part-time Senior Coordinator position is funded 20% from this grant, 20% from Rec Revolving, and the rest from the General Fund. The grant also pays for Coach Bus Trips, program instructors, and the monthly Senior Luncheons.

Ms. Belanger said August 1 was the start date of the grant period. Mr. Tovey said they're aware that we had to get it approved at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Chartrand said this grant is the Hospital living up to the agreement that Beth Israel Lahey made with the State's Attorney General.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the community grant from Exeter Hospital in the amount of \$90,000 to cover funding for senior programming Aug 1 2026 - October 30 2029 and to further authorize the Town manager to sign the corresponding documents. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Parks & Recreation Powder Keg Beer & Chili Application – David Tovey, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director

Mr. Tovey said this is the 12th annual beer & chili fest. There will be no major changes this year.

Mr. Chartrand said the festival needs more chili. Mr. Tovey said we're now providing a stipend and a cash prize for the first-place chili, so that has helped.

89 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the special event application for the Powderkeg Beer
90 & Chili Festival Oct 3 from 7 AM - 6 PM. Ms. Gilman seconded. Ms. Gilman said the 250th
91 committee is considering what they can do at the festival. The motion passed 5-0.

- 92
93 d. Water Capacity – Stephen Cronin, Public Works Director and Steve Dalton,
94 Water and Sewer Director

95 Mr. Cronin said the town has been evaluating surface water and
96 groundwater supplies and needed improvements. We also need to consider how
97 additional water demand is accommodated. We don't want to rely exclusively on
98 surface or groundwater, we want to maintain both sources so the system is
99 resilient and cost-effective. Some improvements are underway, and some are in
100 the CIP over the next several years. The average demand is 1 MGD [million
101 gallons per day], with a maximum demand of 1.6MGD. Sometimes it goes higher
102 than 1.6MGD, but that is associated with water events such as flushing. Source
103 capacity is how much raw water our natural sources can sustainably provide; our
104 surface water sources have a capacity of 1.67MGD, and our groundwater
105 sources have a capacity of 1MGD. The new Drinkwater Road source will be
106 576,000MGD, bringing our total groundwater capacity to 1.576 MGD, for an
107 overall total of 3.246 MGD.

108 Regarding treatment capacity, our surface water treatment plan can
109 handle 1.25 MGD. This is less than the 1.67 from our sources; our capacity is
110 limited by the plant. It's operating at 80% capacity. For groundwater, we can treat
111 1MGD . The total capacity is 2.25 MGD.

112 Regarding how much reserve capacity we should maintain, the
113 recommended standards state that the groundwater total should be sufficient to
114 meet the maximum day demand with the largest well offline, while surface water,
115 should meet the demand in a one in fifty year/extreme drought. Our water system
116 is not interconnected with any of our neighbors, so we're on a "water island."

117 With existing sources, we have 2.25MGD of finished water capacity. The
118 maximum day demand is 1.6MGD. We have a 650,000 gallons per day capacity
119 above the max demand, but according to regulatory criteria, we should have
120 1.75MGD, so we have only 150,000 gallons per day excess capacity. We should
121 be cautious about committing additional supply to future projects.

122 Regarding developments that have been approved but are not currently
123 under construction, there are an estimated 157,440 gallons in demand which
124 have been approved, plus 12,258 GPD which are pending. He's recommending
125 to the Planning Board that any new project requesting connection to the town's
126 water system should be evaluated according to capacity and water supply. We
127 could require an applicant to provide an alternative water source.

128 Regarding source development, the Drinkwater Road well is anticipated
129 to be online by summer 2027. We will be replacing the Lary Lane well in 2027 to
130 restore its full capacity. The surface water treatment plan replacement is in the
131 design phase, with construction proposed in FY28. Additional groundwater

132 exploration is proposed in 2028. The CIP includes the addition of a 4th filter at
133 the groundwater treatment plan in 2031.

134
135 e. Committee Formation – Pedestrian, Accessibility & Cycling Advisory Committee
136 (PAC Advisory Committee) – Paul Cohen, Town Manager

137 Mr. Cohen said in the months that he's been the Town Manager, he's
138 seen concerns and spontaneous discussions about bicycle and pedestrian
139 safety. He's drafted a charge for an advisory committee that could assist the
140 community in addressing these matters. His hesitancy is the number of
141 committees this town has and the effort that the Board brings to those
142 committees.

143 Ms. Belanger said it's helped the Select Board members to have a back-
144 up for the committee meetings. She asked if this committee would look at ADA
145 accessibility, and Mr. Cohen said yes. Ms. Belanger said we have a lot of
146 committees and have a lot of missed meetings due to a lack of a quorum. We
147 should look at committees as a whole and start enforcing rules on them.

148 Ms. Cowan said she doesn't want to say we have this many committees
149 so we can't have any more. She wants to lean into the downtown and making it
150 welcoming.

151 Ms. Gilman said her concern is the staffing of the committee. This would
152 mostly be a Planning issue. Maybe this should be part of the Master Planning
153 Committee? Ms. Belanger said our Town Planner does a lot of staffing right now.

154 Mr. Papakonstantis said we owe it to the community to look at the
155 possibility of creating something. People tend to walk off committees because
156 there's a lack of quorum. He opened the discussion to public comment.

157 Pam Felber of Highland Street said she understands about having too
158 many committees, but eight years ago she moved to Exeter to live in a town
159 that's an active community, with sidewalks, bike lanes, and ADA accessibility.
160 She's an e-bike rider but does it respectfully. At times, she thinks she's going to
161 be bumped off the road. This is about quality of life in our senior years.

162 Chris Zigmont of Crestview Drive said he's a lifelong cyclist and supports
163 the pedestrian accessibility and cycling group. We can do better at providing a
164 safer infrastructure. The town should support 100% of residents and families, not
165 just the car drivers.

166 Joe Fisher of 36 River Street said he raised his family in Exeter and had
167 two boys who were skateboarders. He equates accessibility with friendliness.
168 This town is growing by leaps and bounds. The Academy is adding three
169 duplexes to his neighborhood. It's hard to get around. We should do everything
170 we can for people who want to walk, bike, or use the sidewalks. He supports the
171 committee.

172 Enna Grazier of Warren Avenue said she's served on the BRC for a
173 number of years and has heard and participated in many passionate
174 conversations about bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility. There's a

175 perception that bicycles are for recreation, but they're also used for health,
176 economics, and for the environment.

177 Jean Shiner said she moved to Exeter because of the walkability and the
178 businesses in the town center. She believes in "share the road." She is blind, and
179 has used a guide dog and a cane. Safety is important. An advisory committee
180 would help us work out things we need to work out. Being a more bike-friendly
181 town would help to get more bicyclists on the streets. Wintertime is challenging,
182 she's had to walk in the streets when there is snow on the sidewalks. She would
183 join an advisory committee.

184 Fred Fournier of Aspen Way said we have a large community of blind or
185 visually-impaired people in town. He's concerned with winter travel. He still has
186 some vision but his depth perception is minimal and it's hard to negotiate any
187 kind of snowbank. The streets are the #1 priority in a snowstorm, but once
188 they're done the sidewalks should be the priority.

189 Adam Roberts of Charter Street said he supports ADA accessibility. His
190 daughter is in a wheelchair and she wants to be out and about. Having a
191 committee like this with volunteers from the community looking into these issues
192 is very important.

193 Steve Moll of Greybird Circle, who is president of a Run Club, said we
194 have events that start at Town Hall. We can help on the advisory side. We're in
195 support of a committee to balance the needs of the town and give a healthy
196 lifestyle.

197 Scott Hatch identified himself as not an Exeter resident; the Board had no
198 objection to hearing him speak. Mr. Hatch said he belongs to the Exeter Run
199 Club. We could tell you every issue with the sidewalks and roads. He worked for
200 the Police and wrote grants and did work about pedestrian safety. The bylaws
201 probably don't allow him to be part of the committee, but he thinks this committee
202 would be a great start to get things done.

203 A resident said we need to get back to basic safety with our roads and
204 sidewalks. If committees aren't working, there needs to be some headcount
205 reduction. He supports the creation of this committee. Ms. Gilman thanked this
206 resident for taking the initiative in paving the portion of sidewalk outside his
207 house.

208 Amanda Kelly of Prospect Street said she's in support of this committee.
209 23 of the 25 largest municipalities in New Hampshire have a committee like this;
210 the only two that don't are Exeter and Salem. This is something we're probably
211 missing. Regarding the timing, we just adopted the Complete Streets policy and
212 Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. We may be doing an update to the Master
213 Plan, but this committee could work alongside that. Other communities staff their
214 committees differently. Sometimes committees have a brainstorm session rather
215 than a regular meeting and don't need support staff each meeting.

216 Ben Hodston of Kay Drive said he's a member of an advocacy group,
217 Strong Towns Exeter, which gets 8-10 passionate people who come out but

218 sometimes find it hard to bring that advocacy to the town. This committee would
219 be an awesome outlet for that.

220 Mr. Chartrand said he appreciates the public representation tonight, but
221 the concerns of the Board are real. The Sustainability Committee didn't hold
222 either of their meetings over the summer due to a lack of quorum. It may be time
223 to prune our committee structure. The demand on the Select Board and staff is
224 real. We do need Select Board and staff at most of these meetings.

225 Ms. Belanger said some of these committees meet once a month and
226 they could get through three hours of brainstorming on something that's not
227 possible. She also asked if we could think about adding a parking element to this
228 committee too. Mr. Chartrand said he doesn't think that needs to be part of their
229 charge.

230 Ms. Cowan suggested bringing everyone together in a retreat to talk
231 about this one time, and then determine who needs to be part of these
232 conversations on an ongoing basis. She added that she is not worried about
233 responsible e-bike riders, just about kids that are on the roads.

234 Ms. Belanger said the Chair of the committee puts the agenda together. If
235 it's something about Planning, it could be something Mr. Sharples gets pulled
236 into. We wouldn't have multiple staff members each time.

237 Mr. Papakonstantis said safety is one of our biggest issues on this Board,
238 as well as ADA accessibility. After a snowstorm, there are times when it's ugly.
239 Not all snowstorms are created equal. We can always do better. This year the
240 BRC will see a slightly different approach in paving. Public Works appreciates
241 your patience, and they work very hard. Our new Town Manager has been
242 talking to folks and hearing their ideas, and he appreciates that he put this
243 together for the Board to consider. He asks that Mr. Cohen find a way to make
244 this work that doesn't turn into another committee that can't meet because it
245 doesn't have a quorum. Mr. Cohen should work with staff to look at the
246 committees and bring recommendations for consolidating or sunseting them if
247 needed.

248 Mr. Chartrand said our form of government makes progress difficult, but
249 everyone gets to participate. We only make decisions once a year.

250 Mr. Papakonstantis said we will discuss this again at a future Select
251 Board meeting.

252
253 f. Transportation Funding – Melissa Roy, Assistant Town Manager

254 Ms. Roy said this is funded in a revolving account through a surcharge on
255 motor vehicle registration. This funds Rockingham Meals on Wheels, TASC, and
256 COAST. Previously, COAST had a fixed route in town, but moved to an on-
257 demand service. In 2026, they requested \$37,000. Over the last few years, they
258 have increased what they are requesting, but our fund can't support the
259 increases. In 2025, we asked how many unique riders used their system, and it
260 was 18 people. In 2026, it was 59 people due to a grant, but we expect the grant
261 to close out at the end of September. We have \$3-5,000 at the end of the year. If

we fund the \$25,760 and add a 4% inflation increase, we could support that with the current Transportation funds. COAST is looking for more, but we don't have the funds to support that. Going forward, we'd like the Transportation requests to go before the Select Board.

Ms. Gilman said we don't get the service that the other towns do. She's losing her faith in COAST and would be fine in giving them less money.

Ms. Belanger said she'd be fine with the proposal. People can't use it if we don't have it available. If they can keep bringing people to their home, that's huge.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to fund the COAST program at the previous award of \$25,760 plus a 4% inflation increase for a total of \$26,790 for FY26. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

g. Pairpoint Park Donation Acceptance

Mr. Papakonstantis said this is straightforward.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the donations received during the month of July 2026 totaling \$500 for the design and construction of Pairpoint Park, and direct that the funds be held by the Trustees of Trust Funds in the Pairpoint Park Fund. Disbursement of the funds shall be made by the Town Manager for the purpose of designing and/or constructing Pairpoint Park. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: August 10, 2026

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of August 10, 2026 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

8. Inspectors of Elections

Mr. Cohen said in preparation for the election, the Board should approve the Inspectors of Elections/Ballot Clerks. Mr. Papakonstantis said there are typos in the memo: Gwen English's name should have an "h," and Rachel's last name is "Owens," not "Owns."

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint the slate of registered voters to serve as Inspectors of Elections through July 31, 2028 as presented in our packet. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

9. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

a. Intent to cut

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the notice to cut wood or timber for 47/8/1. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

10. Town Manager's Report

a. Year-To-Date Budget Update

Mr. Cohen said the news continues to be good. The budget is in line. We're continuing to see strong revenue from building permits and fees. Welfare

caseloads are running above normal, but that total budget is only \$200,000. Water and Sewer Revenue funds are at 57% of revenue, against a 58% target.

b. Front/Linden/Pine Streets Roundabout Update

Mr. Cohen said Steve Cronin has been monitoring this project. It was scheduled to be complete at the end of the week, but there was a hiccup with the color of the cement, where the wrong color was shipped to the town. This is creating a delay. The roadway will open at the start of school and before the election, but we may restrict heavy truck traffic until the road can cure for a week or two.

c. Community Rating System – National Flood Insurance Program

Mr. Cohen said there was a staff request from Kristin Murphy about a voluntary program which can provide benefits for residents. This is a FEMA program where people could save on their insurance premiums.

11. Select Board Committee Reports

- a. Ms. Gilman said the 250 Committee has contracted with the Gundalow Company to bring the gundalow to Exeter Oct 2, 3, and 4. The Heritage Commission had a demo review for a garage with no historic value to the town, which was approved. She also gave an update on State issues.
- b. Ms. Belanger had a Planning Board meeting where they discussed the Capital Improvement Plan. The second public hearing is this Thursday. At Housing Advisory, they looked at Zoning ordinances and possible language changes. On Aug 20, she attended a dam removal public meeting.
- c. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- d. Mr. Chartrand said the Conservation Commission took up an approval of something that had been inadvertently done on Wadleigh. Members were reluctant to issue approval, but it had been inadvertent and they approved it. The applicant and the contractor agreed to undo some things they had done. The Train Station Committee did a wrap-up on the charette. At the Dam meeting, we heard from folks in Brentwood who want the dam removed.
- e. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Swasey Parkway Trustees voted to fix part of the fence that is unsafe.

12. Correspondence

- a. An email regarding a speed limit review. Mr. Papakonstantis said this was forwarded to Chief McCain, who is reviewing the issue.
- b. Correspondence from resident Nancy Rockwell, to which Mr. Papakonstantis responded.
- c. The letter for the “Seven to Save” program.

13. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meetings are September 14, September 28, Tuesday October 13, October 26, November 9, November 23, December 7, and December 21. The Election is September 8.

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351 14. Non-Public Session

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

353

354 15. Adjournment

355 **MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and
356 the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.

357

358 Respectfully Submitted,

359 Joanna Bartell

360 Recording Secretary

361